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INFANT BAPTISM

A

PART AND PILLAR OF POPERY

BY JOHN GILL, D. D.

REVISED AND EDITED

BY GEORGE B. IDE, D. D.

Baptism
little

WITH AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER BY THE EDITOR.

5084

Philadelphia.

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☞ *These works are bound separately, in paper covers, for general circulation.*

INTRODUCTION.

EVERY thoughtful observer must be aware, that the present aspects of Romanism are as peculiar as they are portentous. While, as a political power, it is rapidly declining; while its presence is endured with reluctance even in Italy itself: the ascendency of its dogmas and ceremonies, and their hold on the minds of men, seem to be strangely increasing. Withered and decrepid as a State, as an Ecclesiastical System it appears imbued with a singular and fearful vitality. Especially is this the case in Protestant lands. The dark shadow of its superstitions is seen returning over nations, from which it was once thought to have been banished forever. In England, in Scotland, on the Continent of Europe, in our own free and enlightened America, Popery is extending its influence, and multiplying its triumphs. Its cardinals and bishops tread again the soil from which the Refor-

mation expelled them. Its schools, and churches, and convents, rise in every city and village. Its gaudy processions and impious mummeries are enacted, without rebuke, in the face of heaven. It boasts its converts gathered from every class and condition, and exultingly points to the long array of "the reconciled." And while it is thus enlarging its numbers by direct accessions, it is viewed with growing favor by multitudes not of its pale. Infidels patronize it. Politicians fawn upon it. The gay and the voluptuous give it their suffrage. Mystics, enthusiasts, formalists, worldlings, all unite to countenance its pretensions, or, at least, to affirm its harmlessness. Even the professed churches of Christ oppose to it but a feeble barrier. The more corrupt fraternize with its spirit, ape its forms, and appropriate all of it but its name; while the great mass of the more pure, however disposed to resist its encroachments, seem well nigh powerless to do so.

How is this phenomenon to be explained? In what manner may we account for the startling fact, that amid the blaze of science, the spread of education the wide diffusion of intelligence, the awakened

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spirit of inquiry and of progress in lands blessed with an open Bible, a free Gospel, and all the appliances of religious instruction—an old, tottering Hierarchy, foul with pollution, laden with abhorred memories, and reeking with the blood of murdered saints, should come forth from the gloom of the dark Past, and flaunting its tattered traditions in the eyes of the nineteenth century, be welcomed and embraced? Must there not be some latent defect—some insidious weakness in the very heart of Protestantism itself, to render possible such a result? We firmly believe that there is. And we are equally confident that we know what it is. The churches, which abjured Popery at the Reformation, have retained, in the practice of infant baptism, the most vital element of Popery; the prolific germ out of which it grew; the secret principle which has engendered all its baleful fruits, and which is ever tending to reproduce them. The essence of Popery lies in the assumption, that sacraments possess an intrinsic power to confer grace; and that, consequently, those who administer them are constituted channels of intercourse and mediation between God and the souls of men.

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All the absurdities and abominations with which Romanism is characterized, are but developments of this central dogma; offshoots from this one poisonous root. But this also is the very core and substance of infant baptism. If its upholders do not regard it as the merest nullity—a rite as vapid and meaningless as it is unscriptural—they must ascribe to it some mysterious efficacy; some hidden and magical power; by which it influences the spiritual state of its recipients, and brings them under moral relations different from those of others. Accordingly, we find that wherever it is left to unfold itself freely—wherever it is not shorn of its natural proportions and accompaniments by contact with the advocates of primitive truth and order,—it always appears in connection with baptismal regeneration, infant church-membership, and sacramental holiness. And this is Popery.

Here, then, is the rottenness of Protestantism. Here is the weak point in her defences, which lays her open to the inroad of the foe. Here is the wily agent of the Papacy within her very intrenchments, paralyzing her strength, turning her weapons against herself, seducing her soldiers, and leading

them off to swell the hostile ranks. Never can she prosper in the struggle, till this dangerous inmate be unmasked and thrust out. As well may the stream be dried up, while the spring-head flows; as well may pestilence cease, while malaria continues to breathe its infection—as Popery die, while infant baptism lives.

In this state of the moral conflict which is going on in our own and in other lands, it has appeared to the Committee of the American Baptist Publication Society, that a reprint of the celebrated tract of Dr. Gill, entitled, "*Infant Baptism a part and pillar of Popery*," might be eminently seasonable and useful. Its author lived in an age resembling, in some of its aspects, that in which our lot is cast. A national Church, joined in unholy wedlock with the State, and Dissent, forswearing her troth to Christ by marrying herself with Tradition, had begun to bring forth their natural progeny; and Popery grew apace. The English government became alarmed. The partisans of the Establishment trembled. All sects and orders were filled with dismay, and united in the general demand, that more stringent penalties should be enacted

against the ingress of Popish emissaries, and the propagation of Popish tenets. At this juncture, Dr. Gill, surveying the crisis with his clear eye, and fathoming its causes with his keen and deep-searching logic, lifted up his warning voice, and showed conclusively, that the source of the evil did not lie in any freedom granted to Romanists, but in infant baptism itself, which, nestled in the bosom of Protestantism, had diffused a Papal leaven through its entire body.

It seemed to the Committee, that a production so influential in its own time, and so suited to the present, deserved something better, than to be swept away on the stream of the past, or to be searched out with difficulty in the scarce and dear volumes of the author's miscellaneous works. They, therefore, resolved to revise and publish it; and appointed the writer of this notice to carry out their decision.

On examination, however, it was found that while the reasoning of the treatise was cogent, and its thoughts massive and powerful, its style was such as greatly to unfit it for general circulation. Dr. Gill, with all his immense learning, was remark-

able for his involved and slovenly mode of writing, even in an age when less heed was given than now to the graces of composition. The editor was, therefore, instructed by the Committee to make such changes in the literary execution of the work as might, in his judgment, adapt it to modern taste, and prepare it for more extensive usefulness. This, the reader is frankly apprised, has been done. While every thought and argument of the author has been scrupulously retained, and in the connection in which he placed them, the language is almost wholly new. The book has, in fact, been entirely rewritten; and, in some cases, a fuller development has been given of topics deemed too briefly stated. The editor has also verified the authorities cited; added new ones; and inserted references to later editions where they exist. In a word, he has taken down "the sword of Goliath" from "behind the ephod,"* where it hung neglected —has stripped off its mouldy covering, wiped away its rust, polished its surface, and done his best to furbish it for the battle. It is true, he might with less time and labor have made a new sword. But

* 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

then it could not be said of that, as it can be of this, "There is none like it." May it prove mighty for the Lord of Hosts, and for the overthrow of tradition and error.

G. B. I.

INFANT BAPTISM,

A

PART AND PILLAR OF POPERY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

HAVING been called upon to maintain certain statements which, in a recent publication,[1] I advanced with respect to infant baptism, or else to retract them, I readily undertake the former; and shall, therefore, in the ensuing treatise, endeavor to explain myself, and to defend the positions then taken. With this view, it will be proper first to recite the paragraph which has been so strenuously assailed. It is as follows: "The Pedobaptists

[1] A Reply to Rev. Peter Clark's Defence of Infant Baptism.

are ever restless and uneasy, struggling to sustain, if possible, their unscriptural practice of infant baptism; although it is no other than a pillar of Popery; a corruption, by which Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations; which forms the basis of national churches and ecclesiastical establishments; and which, uniting the church and the world, binds them together so firmly, that there can never be a full separation of the one from the other, nor any thorough reform in religion, until it be wholly removed. But, although it has so long and so largely obtained, and still does obtain, yet I believe, with a firm and unshaken faith, that the time is hastening on, when it will no more be practised in the world; when churches will be formed on the model ordained by Christ, and observed by the Apostles; when the doctrines and discipline of the Gospel will be restored to their primitive purity and lustre; and when the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper will be administered as they were first delivered, clear from all the superstitious admixtures with which later times have defaced them. All this, I am persuaded, will be accomplished,

when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and His name one."

The paragraph, thus cited, consists of several distinct propositions, which I shall endeavor, in the following chapters, to elucidate and establish. And if, in the course of the investigation, any thing should be said that may seem to savor of severity, let it be remembered that all my remarks are directed against infant baptism itself, and not against the individuals who practice it. For the evangelical denominations adhering to this custom, I cherish the highest regard. I recognize them as members of the body of Christ, and fellow heirs with the saints. I rejoice in their general advocacy of the doctrines of the Gospel; in their Christian spirit; in their unwearied labors to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer. But while I love and venerate them for their many excellencies, I do not the less deplore the one error by which those excellencies are sullied. And I deplore it, not because it is fatal to their piety, and will ultimately bar them out of heaven; but because, however honestly held, it nevertheless dis-

honors the authority of the Saviour whom they profess to obey, hinders the supremacy of His laws, and counteracts their own efforts to promote it. May "the Spirit of truth" so enlighten our minds, that we shall all know and receive "the truth, the whole truth, and noth ng but the truth."

CHAPTER II.

RELATION OF INFANT BAPTISM TO POPERY.

My first position is, that infant baptism is a part and pillar of Popery; and that by means of it Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations.

The phrase, infant baptism, is employed here and throughout this discussion, in accordance with common usage, although properly speaking, the practice to which it is applied, should be designated infant sprinkling.

That unwritten traditions are regarded by Papists, as of equal authority in faith and practice with the Holy Scriptures, none can doubt who are at all conversant with their writings. The Council of Trent asserts, that "traditions respecting both faith and manners, orally delivered, and successively preserved in the Catholic Church, are to be received with equal affection of piety and reverence, as the Books

of the Old and New Testaments."[1] Popish writers even prefer tradition to Scripture. Thus Bellarmine says; "The Scriptures, without tradition, are neither simply necessary nor sufficient; but unwritten traditions are neces sary. Tradition alone is sufficient; but the Scriptures alone are not sufficient."[2] Another of their writers affirms, that "the authority of ecclesiastical traditions is more fit than the Scriptures, to ascertain any thing doubtful, even that which may be made out from Scripture; since ecclesiastical traditions and the common opinion of the church are clearer, and more open and truly inflexible; while, on the contrary, the Scriptures have frequently much obscurity in them, and may be drawn hither and thither, like a nose of wax; and, as a leaden rule, may be applied to every impious opinion."[3] Bailey, the Jesuit, thus expresses himself. "I will go farther and say, that we have as much need of tradition as of Scripture; yea, more, because the Scripture minis-

[1] Session IV. Decreta de Canone Scripturæ.

[2] De Verbo Dei, c. IV. Sect. 1, 6.

[3] Pighius, apud Rivet. Cathol. Orthodox, Tract I. Quest. 6. p. 99

ters to us only the dead and mute letter; but tradition, by means of the ministry of the church, gives us the true sense, which is not had distinctly in the Scripture. In tradition, therefore, consists the Word of God rather than in the written letter alone. It is sufficient for a good Catholic, if he understands it is tradition; nor need he inquire after any thing else."[1]

By tradition, these Popish authorities mean, not tradition handed down in the Scripture, but without it, and distinct from it; unwritten tradition, apostolical tradition, so called; tradition, not delivered by the Apostles in their writings, but, as it is pretended, communicated by word of mouth to their successors, or to the churches. That we may not mistake them, Andradius tells us, that "of necessity, those traditions also must be believed, which can be proved by no testimony of Scripture." And Petrus a Soto still more plainly and openly affirms; "It is a rule infallible and Catholic, that whatsoever things the Church of Rome believes, holds, and keeps, which are not de-

[1]Apud Rivet. p. 142.

livered in the Scriptures, the same came by tradition from the Apostles; also, all such observances and ceremonies, whose beginning, author, and origin are not known, or cannot be found, were, beyond doubt, delivered by the Apostles."[1] This is the sense which Romanists attach to Apostolical tradition.

Now, upon this assumed apostolical and ecclesiastical tradition, all the essential peculiarities of Popery are based. This is the prolific fountain from which they all spring. This is the standard to which they are all brought, and by which they are all confirmed. And what is there, be it ever so absurd or impious, that may not be proved by it, if once it be admitted as an authoritative rule? It is upon this ground, that Papists assert and maintain the observation of Easter and Lent; the adoration of images and relics; the worship of the virgin Mary; the sign of the cross; the invocation of saints; the sacrifice of the mass; transubstantiation; the withholding of the cup from the laity; holy water; ex-

[1] See the Abstract of the History of Popery. Part II. pp. 252, 253

treme-unction; prayers for the dead; auricular confession; the sale of pardons; purgatory; pilgrimages; monastic vows; and other superstitious opinions and practices, more numerous than we have space to mention.

Among pretended apostolical traditions, infant baptism is to be reckoned; and here lies the chief support to which its advocates appeal. Origen, who lived in the former part of the third century, and who was the first[1]

[1] It has been asserted by Dr. Wall and others, that Irenæus, who wrote about A. D. 178, was an advocate for infant baptism. The passage, from which this opinion has been drawn, is contained in his Treatise against Heresies, Book II. chap. 22, sect. 4. "Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare; omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes et parvulos et pueros et juvenes et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit aetatem, et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes; in parvulis, parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes aetatem, simul et exemplum illis pietatis effectus et justitiæ et subjectionis; in juvenibus juvenis, exemplum fiens et sanctificans Domino. Deinde et usque ad mortem pervenit, ut sit primogenitus ex mortuis, ipse primatum tenens in omnibus, princeps vitæ, prior omnium, et precedens omnes." "He"—that is, Christ—"came to redeem all by Himself; all, I say, who through him are regenerated unto God; infants, little children, boys, young men, and older persons. Hence, He passed through every age,

ancient writer that distinctly approved of infant baptism, represents it as a tradition

and for infants became an infant, sanctifying infants; among little children He became a little child, sanctifying those of this age, and, at the same time, presenting to them an example of piety, of uprightness, and of obedience; among young men He became a young man, that he might set them an example, and sanctify them to the Lord. Thus, He passed through even unto death, that He might be the first born from the dead, Himself holding the primacy in all things, the Prince of Life, superior to all, and preceding all."

It has been argued that Irenæus uses the expression, "regenerated unto God," as equivalent to baptism; and hence, that as he employs the phrase in connection with infants, there is here a distinct recognition of infant baptism. If this were true, it would follow that our author is incorrect in affirming that Origen was the first of the early fathers who approved infant baptism, since Irenæus lived more than half a century before him. That Dr. Gill, however, was aware of the existence of this passage, and had examined it well before he made the above statement, is proved by his own writings. In a treatise entitled, "*Infant Baptism an Innovation*," written previously to the one now reprinted, he says: "I come next to the words of Irenæus, where he says, 'Christ came to save all who by Him are born again unto God,' etc. In this, I shall notice only the sense of the phrase, 'born again unto God,' and the injury that is done to Irenæus, in making it signify baptism, or any thing else but the grace of regeneration. Christ and his Apostles no where

from the Apostles. The words ascribed to him are these: "For this"—that is, for ori-

call baptism by the name of the new birth; and the practice of so terming it among the ancients had not obtained in the time of Irenæus. The passage adduced from Justin Martyr does not prove it; and those cited from Tertullian and Clemens of Alexandria are too late. In Irenæus there are two passages in which it is pretended that this expression denotes baptism. The one is where he says, "Et iterum potestatem regenerationis in Deum dans discipulis, dicebat eis; Euntes, docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti." "And again, giving to his disciples the power of regeneration unto God, he said, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Adv. Haeres, L. III. c. 17. By this power or commission, is meant, not authority to baptize, but authority to teach the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit of God, and its necessity to salvation, and in order to baptism. This is the first and principal part of the apostolical commission, as the order of the words show; and it is most reasonable to think, that he should so call the commission, not from its more remote and less principal part, but from its first and more important one. The other passage is where he speaks of certain heretics, as having been seduced to the denial of "the baptism of regeneration unto God." L. I. c. 21, 1. But this shows rather, that baptism and regeneration, though connected, are two different things, the former being a symbol of the latter; just as the scriptural phrase, "the baptism of repentance," means that

ginal sin—"the church has received a tradition from the Apostles, even to give baptism

baptism is something different from repentance; baptism being so called, because repentance is a prerequisite to it. For the same reason, it is called the baptism of regeneration, because regeneration is absolutely necessary to it. To all this I merely add, that Irenæus not only uses the word regeneration in a different sense from baptism elsewhere (see L. IV c. 59, and L. V. c. 15); but in the very passage now in dispute, he most clearly uses it in another sense; since he says, "Christ came to save all who by Him are born again unto God;" *by Him*, and not by baptism. This is explained by what is said of His sanctifying all sorts of persons, infants, little ones, young men, and old men; which cannot be understood of His baptizing them; for He baptized none, and, therefore, could not be said to regenerate any in that sense. To consider Irenæus as referring here to baptism, is to make him utter a gross falsehood, viz., that Christ came to save such and such only as are baptized. Since, then, his words, without straining them, are capable of another sense agreeable to truth; as that Christ came to save all who are regenerated by His grace,—are we not bound to believe that this latter sense is his? Indeed, to depart from this clear, literal sense of his words, which contains a well-known truth, and to fix on them a figurative, improper one, which makes him say a monstrous untruth, is most cruel usage of the good old father." Gill's Tracts, Vol. II., pp. 389–392. London, 1773.

Irenæus, in the Book from which this controverted passage is taken, is arguing against the Valentinians, a

to infants."[1] There is, however, little reason to regard the passage as genuine. A large

Gnostic sect, who denied the actual incarnation of Christ and asserted that His whole appearance on earth was a mere vision. In opposition to this destructive error, Irenæus affirms, that the divine nature of Christ entered into real and vital union with our humanity; that He was truly man, living, breathing, speaking amongst men; and that, as the human race had been alienated from God by the fall of their first head, Adam, so Christ, by becoming their second Head, had effected their restoration. In order to achieve this, He became one of them; identifying Himself with them in all their ages and conditions: comprehending within Himself, as their Representative, all classes; teaching and exemplifying the truth to all; and, by His atoning death, bringing all into a new relation to God—a state in which mercy and grace were possible. To prevent misconception, however, the qualifying statement is added, that none would actually attain the blessing of salvation by Christ, but those who should be regenerated by Him unto God; or in other words, who should experience the transforming efficacy of His blood, applied by His Spirit. I am constrained to believe, that the simple and entire meaning of Irenæus is, that Christ came to save, and would save, all truly converted persons, of whatever age or rank;

[1] "Pro hoc ecclesia apostolis traditionem suscepit, etiam parvulis baptismum dare." Origen, Comment. in Epistolam ad Romanos. VI. Tom. II. p. 543.

portion of the works of Origen has perished; and those that still exist, have, for the most part, come down to us, not in the original Greek, but in a Latin translation by Rufinus, a writer of the fourth century, by whom they are known to have been extensively interpolated. So clearly has this been ascertained, that no judicious critic will place confidence in any writing of Origen, which is to be found only in the translation of Rufinus.[1] Augustine, who was a warm advocate for infant baptism, also, defends it as a custom of the church not to be despised, and as an apostolical tradition generally received.[2] But as he was contemporary with Rufinus, he probably

and that, consequently, there is not the slightest allusion to baptism in the whole passage.

For similar views, though differing in some particulars, the reader may consult two very able articles; the one by Dr. Sears, in the Second Part of his Reply to Burgess on Baptism, in the Christian Review, Vol. III. pp. 208–213; the other by Dr. Chase, in the Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. VI. pp. 646–656.—Ed.

[1] See Lardner, Works, Vol. II. pp. 482. 497.

[2] "Hoc ecclesia a majorum fide percepit." Serm. X. de verb. apost. c. 2; De Genesis, Lib. X. c. 21; and De Baptismo contr. Donat. Lib. IV. c. 23. 24.

took the hint of infant baptism being an apostolical tradition from the Latin translation of Origen made by the latter; since no other ecclesiastical writer previously speaks of it in this manner. The uncertainty of any apostolical tradition in favor of infant baptism seems to be conceded by Jeremy Taylor, when he says,[1] "Now a tradition apostolical, if it be not consigned with a fuller testimony than of one person, whom all after ages have condemned of many errors, will obtain so little reputation amongst those who know that things have upon greater authority pretended to derive from the Apostles and yet falsely, that it will be a great argument that he is credulous and weak that shall be determined by so weak probation in matters of so great concernment."[2] Yet it is by "a probation" thus "weak," that many are "determined" in the

[1] Liberty of Prophesying. Works. Vol. V. p. 552. Eden's ed. London, 1849.

[2] This quotation from Jeremy Taylor has not, perhaps, all the force which Dr. Gill seems to ascribe to it. The Bishop, in pleading for toleration to the Anabaptists, as he calls them, gives a summary of the arguments adduced in favor of infant baptism, and then of those which were urged against it. It is in the latter connection, that

matter of infant baptism; for not only do Popish writers, as Bellarmine and others, make it an unwritten, apostolical tradition, but even some Protestant Pedobaptists show a good will to place it among the unwritten sayings of Christ, or of his Apostles; and satisfy themselves with a supposition so gratuitous. Thus Mr. Fuller, a late Pedobaptist writer, says, "We do freely confess that there is neither express precept nor precedent in the New Testament for the baptizing of infants; yet, as St. John tells us, that Jesus did many things which were not written,[1] for aught that

the passage referred to occurs. He states it, therefore, as the opinion of the opponents of infant baptism, not as his own. A much more satisfactory admission on the same point is afforded by Neander, in his Church History, Vol. I. p. 314, Torrey's Translation. "Origen, in whose system, infant baptism could readily find its place, declares it to be an apostolical tradition; an expression, by the way, which cannot be regarded as of much weight in this age, when the inclination was so strong to trace every institution, which was considered of special importance, to the Apostles; and when so many walls of separation, hindering the freedom of prospect, had already been set up between this and the apostolic age.—Ed.

[1] John xxi. 25.

appears to the contrary, infant baptism may have been one of them."[1] In like manner, Mr. Walker argues, "It does not follow that our Saviour gave no precept for the baptizing of infants, because no such precept is particularly expressed in Scripture; for our Saviour spoke many things to His disciples concerning the kingdom of God, both before His passion, and after His crucifixion, which are not written in the Scriptures; and who can say, but that among those many unwritten sayings of His, there might be an express precept for infant baptism?"[2] And Mr. Leigh, one of the disputants in the Portsmouth Discussion, suggests, that "although infant baptism is not to be found in the writings of the Apostle Paul extant in the Scriptures, yet it might be in some writings of his which are lost, and not now extant."[3] All this is plainly giving up

[1] Infant's Advocate, p. 71, 150. [2] Modest Plea, p. 268.
[3] Narrative of the Portsmouth Disputation, pp. 16–18.
We find Dr. Woods of Andover making a similar concession. In his Lectures on Infant Baptism, p. 11, he says, "It is a plain case, that there is no express precept respecting infant baptism in our Sacred Writings. The proof, then, that it is a divine institution must be made

infant baptism as contained in the Sacred Writings, and placing it upon unwritten, apostolical tradition; and that, too, conjectural and uncertain.

out in some other way." What can this other way mean, but tradition? It must surely be his intention to affirm that a rite was ordained by Christ, and practised by the Apostles, for which the Scriptures contain no precept. How can he know it? Whatever he may call the channel by which he professes to have received the proof of such a fact, it resolves itself into tradition; for to admit as of divine origin an institution concerning which the Bible is silent, is to give up the sufficiency of revelation, and accept the authority of tradition. Prof. Stuart, also, in the Biblical Repository for 1833, p. 385, says, "Commands, or plain and certain examples, in the New Testament relative to it"—that is, infant baptism—"I do not find." And Dr. Neander, in his Planting and Training, p. 101, declares, "As baptism was closely united with a conscious entrance on Christian communion, faith and baptism were always connected with one another; and thus it is in the highest degree probable that baptism was performed only in instances where both could meet together, and that the practice of infant baptism was unknown to the apostolic age." In his Church History, Vol. I., p. 311, Torrey's Translation, he makes the same admission in still stronger terms. "Baptism was at first administered only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have a.l reason for not deriving infant baptism from

Now, infant baptism, with all the ceremonies attending it, for which also apostolical tradition is pretended, makes a very considerable figure in Popish pageantry. Romanists administer the rite with circumstances of great pomp and show; such as the consecration of the water; the presence of sponsors, who answer the interrogatories, and make the renunciation, in the name of the child; exorcisms, exsufflations, crossings, the use of salt, spittle, and oil. Before the baptism, the water is consecrated with much solemn parade. First, the priest makes an exorcism; breathing three times into the water in the figure of a cross, and saying, "I adjure thee, O creature of water!" Then he divides the water after the manner of a cross, and makes three or four crossings. Next, he takes a horn of oil, and pours it three times upon the water in the form of a cross, and makes a

apostolical institution." Now, if any trace of infant baptism were to be found in the New Testament, or in any writing pertaining to the first age of the church, it could not have escaped the searching eye of Neander, whose knowledge of primitive antiquity is admitted by all to be unsurpassed in depth and comprehensiveness.—Ed.

prayer, that the font may be sanctified, and the Eternal Trinity be present; saying, "Descend from heaven, and sanctify this water, and give grace and virtue, that he who is baptized according to the command of Thy Christ, may be crucified, and die, and be buried, and rise again, with Him."

The sponsors, or sureties, then recite on behalf of the child, the creed and the Lord's prayer, renounce the devil and all his works, and answer the questions put in the name of the child. The form of interrogation and reply according to the Roman ritual, is this; "The name of the infant being called, the presbyter must say, Dost thou renounce Satan? Answer, I do renounce. And all his works? Answer, I do renounce. And all his pomps? Answer, I do renounce." Three times these questions are put, and three times the sureties answer. The interrogations are sometimes made by a priest, sometimes by a presbyter, and sometimes by an exorcist. The following question is also added, "Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?" To which the sponsors reply, "I do believe."

Previous to being baptized, the infant is breathed upon, and exorcised, that the wicked spirit may be driven from it, and that it may be delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the kingdom of Christ. The following is the formula for this part of the service prescribed by the Papal code. "Let him—the minister, priest, deacon, or exorcist—blow into the face of the person to be baptized, three times, saying, Go out, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." That of Gregory is slightly different. "I exorcise thee, O unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou go out and depart from this servant of God."

After the infant has been exorcised and blessed, salt is put into its mouth, as a token of its being seasoned with the salt of wisdom; and as an intimation that "by the doctrines of faith, and by the gift of grace, he shall be preserved from the corruption of sin, experience a relish for good works, and be nurtured with the food of divine knowledge." The priest first blesses the salt after this manner, "I exorcise thee, O creature of salt;" and then,

having blessed it, he puts it into the mouth of the infant, saying, "Receive the salt of wisdom unto life everlasting."

The nostrils and ears of infants at their baptism are also touched with spittle by the priest, to indicate that their senses are opened to receive the savor of the knowledge of God, and to hear his commands; and that "as sight was given to the blind man mentioned in the Gospel, whom the Lord, having spread clay on his eyes, commanded to wash them in the waters of Siloam, so by the efficacy of holy baptism, a light is let in on the mind which enables it to discern heavenly truth." Formerly spittle was put upon the eyes and the tongue; but that part of the ceremony seems now to be laid aside. And yet no farther back than the birth of king James I, it appears to have been in use; since, at his baptism, his mother sent word to Hamilton, archbishop of St. Andrews, who was to officiate on the occasion, to forbear the use of spittle, saying, "She would not have a pocky priest to spit in her child's mouth."[1] The

[1] Abstract of the History of Popery, part I, p. 114.

prelate, it was well known, had led so licentious a life, as to have become diseased through his debaucheries. [1] In queen Mary's reign, the practice seems to have been common; for when the martyr, Robert Smith, was asked by Bonner, in what particulars Papists dissented from the word of God in the administration of baptism, he answered; "First, in hallowing your water; in conjuring the same; in baptizing children with anointing and spitting in their mouths, mingled with salt; and with many other lewd ceremonies, not one point of which is able to be proved in God's order."[2] All of which he calls "a mingle-mangle," and "a shameful blasphemy against Christ."

Chrism is another ceremony used both before and after baptism. The parts anointed, are the breast, shoulders, and head; the breast, that no remains of the latent enemy may reside in the person baptized; the shoulders, that he may be fortified and strengthened to do good works to the glory of God; and the

[1] Vide Rivet, Animadv. in Grot. Annotat. in Cassander, Consultat, p 72.

[2] Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, vol. III, p. 400. [Vol. VIII. p. 351. Cattley's ed., London, 1838.]

head, to denote, "that from the moment of his baptism, he is united as a member to Christ, his Head, and engrafted on his body; and that he is, therefore, called a Christian from Christ, as Christ is so called from Chrism." This anointing is made in the form of a cross. On applying it to the shoulders, the priest says, "Flee, thou unclean spirit, give honor to the living and true God." On applying it to the breast, he says, "Go out, thou unclean spirit, give place to the Holy Ghost." And when he applies it to the head, he says to the candidate, "I annoint thee with the oil of salvation, that thou mayest have life everlasting."

The next ceremony is that of signing the infant with the sign of the cross. This is made in several parts of the body, especially the forehead, eyes, and ears, to declare, that "by the mystery of baptism, the senses of the person baptized are opened and strengthened, to enable him to receive God, and to understand and observe his commandments;" and to signify that he is now consecrated by the cross to the service of Christ, and to a manful resistance against Satan. In ancient times,

honey and milk, or wine and milk, were given after baptism; though the practice has now fallen into disuse. Infants were also admitted to the Lord's supper. This custom continued for several centuries in the Latin Church, and is still preserved in the Greek Church.[1]

Should the reader require proof of the use of these various observances, he may consult an able treatise "on the ancient rites and ceremonies of baptism," by Joseph Vicecomes, a learned Papist, as he is denominated by Dr. Wall; where he will find them largely treated, and the authorities for them fully cited. These ceremonies are also fully rehearsed and condemned by the ancient Waldenses, in a tract on Antichrist, supposed to have been written early in the twelfth century.[2]

[1] For a similar account of the baptismal ceremonies practised by Romanists, see Cramp's Text Book of Popery, pp. 122–124. London, 1839.—Ed.

[2] Moreland's History of the Churches of Piedmont, p. 173

To this treatise Perrin assigns the date of 1120. But as it contains quotations from the Scriptures with the division of chapters and verses; which did not come into use until the latter part of the thirteenth century; either the date is too early, or this division was afterwards introduced into it by some copyist.—Ed.

It may, perhaps, be asked, to what purpose is this account of the ceremonies observed by Papists in the administration of baptism to infants, since they are not used by Protestant Pedobaptists? I answer, it is to show what a prominent place infant baptism, with the ostentatious ritual attending it, holds in the system Popery; and that, being thus interwoven with its very structure, and contributing largely to its pomp and parade, it may with propriety be called a part of it. Besides, although the ceremonies above described are not all practiced now by any class of Protestant Pedobaptists, yet several of them are still retained by many who call themselves Protestants. Of this kind, are sponsors; the interrogations made to them, and the answers given, in the name of infants; the renunciation of the devil and all his works; and signing with the sign of the cross. And since these and the others all claim apostolical authority, and most of them, if not all, have as good and as early a pretension to it as infant baptism itself; those, who admit *that* on this footing, ought to admit *these*, its adjuncts, also. On this subject the reader is referred to a treatise

by me, entitled, *The Argument from Apostolical Tradition in favor of Infant Baptism Considered.*

Most of the ceremonies which have been mentioned, are noticed by Basil, who lived in the fourth century, as then in use, and as derived, not from Scripture, but from tradition. Speaking of the sign of the cross in baptism, he says, "We sign with the sign of the cross. Who has taught this in Scripture? We consecrate the water of baptism and the oil of unction, as well as him who receives baptism. From what Scriptures? Is it not from private and secret tradition? Moreover, the anointing with oil, what passage in Scripture teaches this? Now a man is thrice immersed; from whence is it derived or enjoined? Also the rest of what is done in baptism, as the renouncing of Satan and his angels; from what Scripture have we it? Is not this from private and secret tradition?"[1] And, in like manner, Augustine speaks of exorcisms and exsufflations in baptism, as derived from ancient tradition, and of universal use in the

[1] De Spiritu Sancto, c. 27.

church.[1] Now, whoever receives infant baptism on the ground of apostolical tradition, ought to receive these also, since they rest on precisely the same foundation.

The various ceremonies noticed above, however they may have been subsequently modified and extended, all go back to a very remote antiquity. They are coeval with infant baptism itself, and some of them even preceded it. Pedobaptism was first recognized as an established institution of the church, in the early part of the fifth century. Several doctors in the preceding century had, indeed, espoused and asserted it; and the practice had gradually spread, especially in North Africa. But it was not until the provincial council of Mileve, more correctly called the council of Carthage, held about, A. D., 418, that any canon was passed in its favor. This Bishop Taylor acknowledges.[2] Grotius also takes the same ground, and affirms this to be the first council in which the custom was men-

[1] De Peccato Orig. L. II. c. 40. De Nupt. et concup L. I. c. 20: L. II. c. 18.

[2] Liberty of Prophesying Works, Vol. V p 552.—Eden's ed

tioned with approbation.[1] And Augustine, in his book against the Donatists, written before the meeting of this council, while he asserts that the church had always held infant baptism, and that it was most rightly believed to have been delivered by apostolical tradition, nevertheless confesses that as yet it had not been instituted or sanctioned by the decree of any council.[2] What, however, had not then been done, was effected soon afterwards, and, probably, in a great degree, through his own influence. At the council mentioned above, over which he himself presided, the following canon was enacted. "Also it is our pleasure, that whosoever denies that new-born infants ought to be baptized—let him be anathema."[3] The decrees of this council were sent to Pope Innocent I., and by him approved;[4] thus identifying the then nascent Papacy with the earliest canonical sanction of infant baptism. If, then, this rite first received the authority of law from a Popish council, and was first confirmed

[1] Comment. on Matt. xix. 14.

[2] De Baptismo contra Donatist. L. IV. c. 24.

[3] Dupin's Eccl. History Vol. I. p. 635. Dublin, 1623.

[4] Madgeburg Centuriators, cent. V. c. 9, pp. 468, 473

as an established rule by the Pope himself, may it not well be called a part of Popery? The two are, in fact, indissolubly united—one in their origin, their growth, and their results. The same mother-heresy,—Baptismal Regeneration—which gave birth to Popery, gave birth to Infant Baptism. They were engendered in the same dark womb of ignorance and superstition. They came forth together. They grew up together. Together they overspread the nations. And together shall they disappear before the light of Christ's Gospel, and the brightness of his coming.

Further, baptism by immersion, which for thirteen hundred years was generally observed in the Latin Church, and is still universally practiced in the Greek Church, was first changed into sprinkling by the Papists. This was not a mere change in the form of baptism. It was the abrogation of baptism itself. For it is not, as some consider, a matter of indifference whether much or little water be used in baptism. Immersion belongs to the very essence of baptism, and without it, there can be no baptism. As Sir John Floyer observes, "it is no circumstance, but the very

act of baptism."[1] The same writer also declares, that "aspersion, or sprinkling, was brought into the church by the Popish Schoolmen, and that the English Dissenters adopted it from them. The Schoolmen employed their wits to find out reasons for the alteration to sprinkling, and brought it into use in the twelfth century."[2] And it must be observed, to the honor of the Church of England, that it has not established sprinkling in baptism to this day; sprinkling being permitted only when it is certified, that the child is weak, and not able to bear dipping. In all other cases, the Rubric orders the priest to dip the child warily. The legal sanction of sprinkling in Great Britain came from the Presbyterians during the civil war. The Westminster Assembly of Divines decided for sprinkling against dipping by a majority of only one; twenty-five voting for it, and twenty-four in opposition to it. On their recommendation, it was established by Act of Parliament in 1664.[3] They borrowed it from Geneva;

[1] Essay to restore Dipping, p. 44.
[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. pp. 12, 22.

and Geneva borrowed it from Rome. That this innovation had its rise from the authority of the Pope, Dr. Wall himself acknowledges, when he affirms that the sprinkling of infants is from Popery. "All the nations of Christians," he says, "that do now, or formerly did, submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize their infants by pouring or sprinkling. And though the English received not this custom till after the decay of Popery, yet they have since received it from such neighboring nations as had begun it in the time of the Pope's power. But all other Christians in the world, who never owned the Pope's usurped power, do, and ever did, dip their infants in their ordinary use."[1] Thus does it appear that infant baptism, both with respect to its subjects, and the mode in which it is now administered, may, with great propriety, be called a part and branch of Popery.

But not only is it a part of Popery, and thus contributing to strengthen it, as a part

[1] History of Infant Baptism, Vol. II. p 414. Oxford, 1835.

does the whole; it is, moreover, its pillar and main support. It is the source from which Romanists, in contending with Protestants, draw the strongest arguments in favor of their traditions, and of the authority of the church to alter the rites of divine worship; on which, as we have seen, the essential characteristics of Popery depend. Papal disputants sadly embarrass Protestant Pedobaptists, when they bring forward infant baptism, and urge their opponents to prove it by Scripture, both in its subjects and in its mode; and if they cannot do this, then either to give it up entirely, or allow of unscriptural traditions and the authority of the church; adding the perplexing question, that if they admit unwritten traditions and the custom of the church in one case, why do they reject them in others? This way of arguing, as Mr. Stennett observes,[1] was used by Cardinal Du Perron, in his reply to king James I., and by Mr. John Ainsworth against Mr. Henry Ainsworth; and by Fisher, the Jesuit, against archbishop Laud. An instance of the same kind, he adds, is furnished in the controversy

[1] Answer to Russen, p. 173, et sequitar.

between Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, and a learned anonymous writer, said to be M. De La Roque, pastor of the Reformed Church at Rouen, in Normandy. The bishop, in order to defend the withholding of the cup from the laity in the Lord's supper, according to the authority of the church, urged that infant baptism, both as to subject and mode, was unscriptural, resting solely on the authority of tradition and custom; with which, nevertheless, the pretended Reformed complied; and, therefore, why should they refuse compliance in the other case? This reasoning called forth from his antagonist the ingenuous confession, that to baptize by sprinkling was certainly an abuse, derived from the Romish Church without due examination, as well as many other things, which he and his brethren were resolved to correct. He then thanked the bishop for undeceiving them; and freely confessed that, in regard to the baptism of infants, there is nothing in the Gospel to justify the necessity of it; and that the passages produced only prove, at most, that it is permitted, or, rather, that it is not forbidden.

An amusing incident of a similar kind is

told concerning a Mr. Jeremiah Ives, a Baptist minister, famous for his talent at disputation, who lived in the time of king Charles II. The king having heard of his peculiar skill, sent for him to dispute with a Romish priest. This he did, in the presence of the king and of many others, dressed in the habit of an Episcopal clergyman. Mr. Ives pressed the priest closely, showing that to whatever antiquity Romanists pretended, their doctrines and practices could by no means be proved to be apostolical; since they are not to be found in any writings which remain of the apostolic age. The priest, after much wrangling, at last replied, that this argument of Mr. Ives was of as much force against infant baptism, as against the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. To which Mr. Ives answered, that he readily granted what he said to be true. On this, the priest broke up the conference, saying, that he had been cheated, and would proceed no farther; for he came to dispute with a clergyman of the established Church, and it was now evident, that this was an Anabaptist preacher. The behavior of the

priest afforded his majesty, and all present, not a little diversion.[1]

As Protestant Pedobaptists are urged by this argument to admit the unwritten traditions of the Papists; so Pedobaptist Dissenters are pressed, on the same ground, to comply with those ceremonies of the Church of England, which have been retained from the Church of Rome. Dr. Whitby employs this argument with special force, when, after having pleaded for some condescension to Dissenters, in order to reconcile them to the Church, he adds; "And, on the other hand, if, notwithstanding the evidence produced, that baptism by immersion is suitable to the institution both of our Lord and His Apostles, and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ; and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life, as the Apostle clearly maintains the meaning of that rite;[2] if, I say, notwithstanding this, all our Dissenters"—Pedobaptist Dissenters he must mean—"do agree to sprinkle the bap-

[1] Crosby's Hist. of the Baptists, Vol. IV. pp. 247, 248.
[2] Rom. vi. 3–6.

tized infant; why may they not as well submit to the significant ceremonies imposed by our Church? For, since it is as lawful to add to Christ's institutions a significant ceremony, as to diminish a significant ceremony which He or His Apostles instituted, and use another in its stead, which they never did institute; what reason can they have to do the latter, and yet refuse submission to the former? And why should not the peace and union of the church be as prevailing with them, to perform the one, as is their mercy to the infant's body, to neglect the other?"[1] Thus infant baptism is used as the grand plea for compliance with the ceremonies both of the Church of Rome and the Church of England. It is, therefore, the chief prop of these Antichristian Hierarchies—the final appeal to which they resort for countenance in their unscriptural practices. And so triumphant is this appeal, that no Pedobaptist Protestant or Dissenter has ever been able to stand before it.

Further, it is by means of infant baptism that "the Man of Sin" has spread his baneful influence over many nations. This is abun-

[1] Protestant Reconciler, p. 289.

dantly evident from the fact, that through the christening of children, introduced by him, he has made whole nations nominally Christian, and has applied to them the designation of Christendom; thus extending the limits of his universal church, over which, as the pretended Vicar of Christ on earth, he claims absolute power and authority. By the same means, he retains his influence over these nations, keeps them in awe of his spiritual prerogatives, and holds them in servile subjection to his will. With this view, he sedulously inculcates the pernicious dogma, that, by their baptism, received in infancy, they are brought into the fold of the church, within which there is salvation, and out of which there is none; and that, therefore, if they renounce their baptism, or apostatize from the church, they consign themselves to inevitable damnation. Thus, by his menaces and anathemas, he maintains his usurped dominion over the submissive and trembling nations. And if, at any time, one of these nations has courage to oppose him, and to act in disobedience to his mandates, he immediately lays it under an interdict; suspending the sacraments, all public prayers, burials,

and christenings; closing the churches; and forbidding the clergy to administer their functions to any but those who, at a great price, purchase the privilege from Rome.[1] By a superstitious dread of these prohibitions, particularly that which withholds baptism from children, nations are induced to comply with the demands of the Papal power, however oppressive and tyrannical they may be. For it appears most dreadful to parents, that their children should be deprived of baptism, by which, as they are taught to believe, they are made Christians, and without which there is no salvation. Hence whole kingdoms have been known to yield to the most arbitrary exactions of Rome, rather than lose what is deemed so very important. What a tremendous influence, therefore, must infant baptism give to Popery; and how cunningly is it adapted to uphold its power.

But the baneful influence, which Antichrist has extended over the nations, through infant baptism, is yet further seen in that poisonous

[1] Abstract of the History of Popery, Part I. p. 463. Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, Vol. 1. p. 326.

notion, propagated by him, that the sacraments, and especially baptism, confer grace by their intrinsic efficacy; "ex opere operato" from the mere fact of their administration. In other words, he has taught that baptism takes away sin, regenerates men, and saves their souls. This is charged upon him by the ancient Waldenses, in the treatise on Antichrist, to which I have already referred. Speaking of the corruptions of the Papal Hierarchy, they say: "The third work of Antichrist consists in this, that he attributes the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit to the dead, outward act of baptism. In this faith, he baptizes children, teaching that salvation is thus to be obtained. On this ground, he confers orders and other sacraments; and thereon builds all his Christianity. All which is against the Holy Spirit."[1]

The same Popish notion is argued against and exposed by Robert Smith, the martyr, in his examination before Bonner. In reply to a statement of the latter, that "infants are damned, if they die without being baptized,"

[1] Morland's Hist. of the Churches of Piedmont. p. 148.

he asked this question; "I pray, you, my lord, show me, are we saved by water or by Christ?" To which Bonner answered, "By both." "Then," said Smith, "the water died for our sins, and so must ye say that the water hath life, and it being our servant, and created for us, is our Saviour. This, my lord, is a good doctrine, is it not?"[1]

The leaven of this old and destructive error yet remains even in some Protestant churches, which have retained it from Rome. Hence a child, when baptized, is declared to be regenerate, and thanks are returned to God, that it is regenerate. And when it is capable of being catechised, it is taught to say that, in its baptism, it was made a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Such instruction cannot but have a powerful tendency to take off all concern from persons when grown up, respecting any vital change of heart, as necessary to prepare them for heaven; and to encourage in them the fatal presumption, that, notwithstanding their evident want of grace, they yet

[1] Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, Vol. III, p. 400 [Vol. VII. p. 352, Cattley's edition, London, 1838.]

are members of Christ, and shall never perish —are children and heirs of God, and, therefore, must certainly inherit eternal life. The father of lies himself, as Dr. Owen justly observes,[1] could not have devised a more pernicious doctrine, or one more calculated to insure the final ruin of the soul. If, then, through infant baptism, this fatal heresy reigns supreme in lands Papal, and is still widely diffused and powerful in lands Protestant, are we not warranted in saying, that by means of infant baptism Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over the nations?

[1] Theologoumena, L. VI. c. III. p. 477.

CHAPTER III.

RELATION OF INFANT BAPTISM TO CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS.

NOTHING can be more evident than that infant baptism is the basis of national churches, and, therefore, the parent of all the mischiefs which arise from the unhallowed union of the spiritual and the profane in the same religious community. If a church be national, it is of course, composed of all the men, women, and children in the nation, who have not voluntarily withdrawn from it. Of such a church children are originally members, either by birth, and as soon as they are born, being born in the church; that is, in a Christian country, which is the church; or rather by baptism, as it is generally expressed. Thus, according to the order of the Episcopal Church, at the baptism of a child, the minister says, "We receive this child into the congregation of

Christ's flock."[1] By the Assembly of Divines, baptism is called "a sacrament of the New Testament, whereby the parties baptized, are solemnly admitted into the visible church."[2] Of this the following explanation is given in the next answer of the Catechism, in which the general proposition, though correct, is virtually nullified by the exception made in the case of infants, who form a large majority of the baptized. "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers to the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and their obedience to Him; but infants, descending from parents either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized."[3] Calvin, according to whose plan of church government at Geneva that of the Scotch Church was modeled, denominates baptism "a solemn introduction into the church of God." And Mr. Baxter argues, that "if there be neither precept nor example of admitting church members in all the New

[1] Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church.
[2] Larger Catechism, p. 337. [3] Ibid. p. 338.

Testament but by baptism, then all that are now admitted ought to come in by baptism. But there is neither precept nor example in all the New Testament of admitting church members but by baptism. Therefore, they ought to come in the same way now." So then infants, becoming members of a national church by baptism, are originally of it, and constitute the materials of which it is composed. It is, in fact, by the baptism of infants, that a national church is supplied with members, and is supported and maintained. Hence, it may be truly said, that infant baptism is the foundation of a national church, and is, indeed, the very sinews, strength, and life of it. And infants, having been thus admitted members by baptism, continue such when grown up, even though most dissolute in their conduct, as multitudes of them are. Many, instead of being treated as church members, deserve to be sent to the House of Correction —a punishment which some of them receive; and others are guilty of such flagitious crimes, that they die an infamous death. Yet even these die in the communion of the church.

And thus the church and the world are united and kept together till death doth them part

The Independents, according to their principles, would indeed separate the church and the world. But, in practice, they cannot do it, being fettered and hampered by infant baptism and infant membership. The embarrassment which this subject occasions them, appears from the great diversity of opinions which they entertain respecting it, and from the endless inconsistencies in which it involves them. They seem sadly at a loss what to do with infant baptism, or where to place it. Some place it on the interest of the infant in the covenant of grace. But here they often contradict themselves and one another. At one time they say it is interest in the covenant of grace which gives infants a right to baptism; at another, that it is by baptism they are brought into the covenant; and then again, that it is not in the inward part of the covenant that they are interested, but only in its external part, where hypocrites and graceless persons may be; but what that external part is, no mortal can tell. Others, not feeling so certain that their infant seed, as such, are

all interested in the covenant of grace, say it is not that, but the church covenant into which godly parents enter, which gives their children with them a right to church membership and baptism. Children in their minority, it is said, covenant with their parents, and so become church members, and this entitles them to baptism;[1] for, according to the original theory of the Puritans of New England, none but members of a visible church were to be baptized;[2] though Dr. Godwin is of a different opinion.[3] Hence only such as were children of parents in regular connection with the church were admitted to baptism.[4] In the case of excommunicated members, the children born during the period of their excommunication, might not be baptized.[5] Children, when baptized, were not considered confirmed members, until they

[1] Disputation concerning church members and their children at Boston, p. 12, 13. Hooker's survey of Church Discipline, Part III., pp. 24, 25.

[2] Cotton's Way of the Churches in New England, p. 81. Boston Disputation, p. 4. Defence of the Nine Propositions, p. 115.

[3] Government of the Churches of Christ, p. 337.

[4] Defence of the Nine Propositions, p. 69.

[5] Cotton's Way, p. 85.

professed faith and repentance;[1] yet, during their minority which, after the example of Ishmael, reached till they were about sixteen years of age, they were regarded as real members to such intents and purposes, that if their parents were dismissed to other churches, their names were to be inserted with them in the letters of dismission.[2] They were also viewed, while their minority continued, as under the watch and care of the church, and subject to its admonitions and censures, with a view to their moral correction and improvement;[3] though not in such a way as to render them liable to public discipline and excommunication.[4]

The original Puritans thought, that by the covenant seed, who have a right to baptism and church membership, were meant only the seed of parents in immediate fellowship with the church, and not of progenitors more remote.[5] Mr. Cotton says, "Infants cannot claim right to baptism but in the right of one

[1] Cotton's Holiness of church members, p. 19. Boston Disputation, p. 3.

[2] Ibid. p. 15. [3] Cambridge Platform, p. 18.

[4] Boston Disputation, p. 14. [5] Ibid. p. 19.

of their parents or both; where neither of the parents can claim right to the Lord's supper, there their infants cannot claim right to baptism."[1] Afterwards, however, he qualifies this statement by observing, "It may be considered, whether the children may not be baptized, where either the grandfather or grandmother have made profession of their faith and repentance before the church, and are still living to undertake for the christian education of the child; or if these fail, what hinders but that if the parents will resign their infant to be educated in the house of any godly member of the church, the child may be lawfully baptized in the right of its household governor."[2] But Mr. Hooker asserts, that "since children as children have no right to baptism, it belongs not to any predecessors, whether near or remote, to confer a right to this privilege."[3] In the term, predecessors he includes all except the parents themselves; such as grand parents, great grand parents, etc. Thus, too, the ministers and messengers

[1] Cotton's Way of Churches, p. 81. [2] Ibid. 115.
[3] Survey of Church Discipline, part III. p. 13.

of the Congregational Churches that met at the Savoy, declare, that "not only those, who do actually possess faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, are to be baptized; but also infants, one or both of whose parents are believers, are to be admitted to the ordinance, and those only."[1]

Among the commissioners appointed to review the Book of Common Prayer, in the beginning of the reign of Charles II., those of the Presbyterian persuasion brought forward the following motion: "Whereas, there are divers learned, pious, and peaceable ministers, who judge it unlawful to baptize not only children whose parents are atheists, infidels, heretics, or unbaptized, but also such whose parents are excommunicated persons, fornicators, or otherwise notorious and scandalous sinners; we desire that they may not be enforced to baptize the children of such, until they have made an open profession of their repentance before baptism."[2] At the present day, however, the churches of this denomination, except in a few instances, do not adhere

[1] Declaration of Faith and Order. Chap. xxix. p. 48.
[2] Proceedings of the Commissioners, p. 22.

to the principles and practices of their predecessors; but admit to baptism, not only the children of church members, but of those who are not; and, indeed, the children of any, whether religious or irreligious, who may apply to them for that purpose.[1]

But supposing that, in all cases, none but the children of parents in full communion with the church were admitted to baptism—would this remedy the evil? What are such children? No better than others. Like all others, they are born in sin, carnal and depraved. They belong to the world, notwithstanding their religious parentage, until they are called out of it by the effectual grace of God. As they grow up, they show themselves to be of the world, living in accordance with its principles, and manifesting the same sinful and corrupt nature which others exhibit. Some of them even become grossly immoral. Yet no notice is taken of them in the way of censure or expulsion; but they retain their membership,

[1] This must be understood as having special reference to the Presbyterians of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It is not true, at least in its full extent, of this excellent denomination of Christians in our own country.—Ed.

into which they were brought in their infancy, and continue in it to the day of their death. And if this be not uniting and keeping the church and the world together, I know not what is.[1]

The support which infant baptism lends to worldly and national churches, is moreover

[1] Who can estimate the mischiefs which have sprung from such a union? What incalculable injury has been done to the souls of those, who have thus been trained up in the persuasion, that, by their baptism in infancy, they are incorporated into the Church of Christ, invested with a special interest in the covenant of Grace, and made the peculiar objects of the Divine favor! And what immense evils have thereby been inflicted on the cause of the Saviour! How has the lustre of His Gospel been dimmed, its strength weakened, and its progress delayed! And how has His blood-bought Church, ordained by Him to be the fold of His sheep—the home of the renewed—in the world, but not of it—been robbed of its true function, by being converted into a common receptacle for the pure and the impure; a great drag-net, inclosing all alike! Infant baptism tends directly to amalgamate the church with the world. It fills it with secular elements; subjects it to the control of unregenerate men; surrounds it, where circumstances are favorable, with civil endowments, patronage, and power; and thus transforms the Bride of Christ into the bedizened courtesan of the State!—Ed.

evident from the fact that it practically nullifies all the arguments, which are commonly adduced to show their unscriptural character. It is said, and said truly, in opposition to such organizations, that the members of a visible church are represented in the New Testament as "a spiritual seed"—"lively stones,"—"called to be saints"—such as, in the judgment of enlightened charity, may be accounted sincere believers. But are baptized infants of this description? The holiness attributed to them, is only a federal holiness, and that altogether chimerical. Are they saints by effectual calling? Can they, on scriptural grounds, be deemed holy? Do they possess the qualities which, in the New Testament, are invariably ascribed to church members? And if they cannot, even in the widest charity, be regarded as saints, and yet are admitted by baptism into the church, why may not others be so admitted, of whom it cannot be declared that they are regenerate persons?

Besides it is correctly affirmed by the Independents, that members of Gospel churches are not only such as have been called by the Spirit of God, but such as manifest their obe-

dience to that calling by a corresponding profession and conduct; such, moreover, as are known to each other by their confession of faith wrought in them by divine power; and such as willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.[1] Now do infants possess this character? Do they evince by an outward profession and walk, their obedience to a divine inward call? If they do not, and yet are received as church members, why may not others be so received, who give no more evidence than they do? Do they make a confession of faith wrought in them? Does it appear that they have such a faith? And is a confession made, and so made, as to be known by their fellow members? If not, and yet they are received and owned as members, then why may not others be so recognized, who make no more confession than they do? Do infants consent to walk with the church of Christ, and give up themselves to

[1] Savoy—Declaration, p. 57.

the Lord and to one another, and profess to be subject to the ordinances of the Gospel? If they do not, as most certainly they do not, and yet are acknowledged as members, why may not others be acknowledged as members on the same footing? Is it objected to a national church, that persons of the worst characters are members of it, and that by this means the church is filled with men very disreputable and scandalous in their lives? And is not this true of those in congregational churches, who, admitted as members in their infancy, when grown up are very wicked and immoral, and yet their membership continues? Why, then, may not national churches be tolerated, notwithstanding the above objections? From all these reasons, therefore, I deem myself fully warranted in saying, that there cannot be a complete separation of the church from the world, nor any thorough reformation in religion, until infant baptism is wholly removed.

CHAPTER IV.

INFLUENCE OF PEDOBAPTISM ON PROTESTANT CHURCHES HISTORICALLY DEVELOPED.

[BY THE EDITOR.[1]]

A SEARCHING inquiry into the effects of infant baptism on Protestant communities, would furnish most instructive, though painful results. Such an investigation, impartially conducted, would soon show, that this corruption, wherever it is not restrained by antagonistic causes, always tends to Romanism, or to Rationalism. In some soils, and under some influences, it

[1] At the period when Dr. Gill wrote, the influence of Pedobaptism on the churches of the Reformation had only begun to show itself. That influence has since been much more fully manifested. The editor was, therefore requested to prepare and insert a chapter on this subject, containing the substance of what we may well suppose Dr. Gill would have said, had he lived in our day and seen what we have seen. As the chapter thus prepared is closely related to the preceding argument, and depends upon it, it was thought better to publish it in this connection than in an independent form.— ED.

becomes the prolific seed of all that is most baleful in the Papal system. Such was its development in the ancient church. Germinating first in North Africa, the hot-bed of superstition and asceticism, it was quickly transplanted into Egypt, where it thrived luxuriantly among the dreamy speculatists of Alexandria. Thence it spread throughout the Eastern and Western empires, growing up, side by side, with reverence for the outward and the tangible in religion; the love of imposing ceremonies; the adoration of saints and relics; the worship of images; prelatic power, and priestly domination; until, at length, the Roman Hierarchy, propped and buttressed by infant baptism, cast its shadow over the nations.

Similar has been its tendency in the Church of England. At the period of the Reformation, the aspect of this Church was, in some respects, bright with promise. Her creed was, in the main, eminently evangelical. Her early teachers were men of great scriptural knowledge, of fervent piety, and unblemished lives. A large portion of her laity was also pervaded by a growing love for a pure Gospel. But

while she abjured the supremacy of Rome, abolished the mass, and purged out the grosser abominations of Popery; yet, by adhering to infant baptism, with its natural concomitants, Episcopacy, and a State-Establishment, she retained a principle which was calculated to undo all her work, and revive within her own communion the most essential characteristics of the "Man of Sin." The sphere, in which this insidious leaven was thus left to operate, was particularly fitted to develop its influence. The national mind of England, either from constitutional structure, or the long schooling of circumstances, has a strong papistic element. Sturdy and independent in matters of civil polity, it evinces a strange propensity to be led in religion. It bows to authority. It trembles before august names, and lofty pretensions. It is fond of pomp and external show. It venerates the time-honored, the far-descended. In such a state of society, infant baptism found a congenial home, and free scope to work out its Popish tendencies. And how successfully it has done so, the present religious position of that country clearly shows. The land which, around the martyr-

fires of Smithfield, swore eternal hatred to Popery, is now full of Popish dignitaries, Popish priests, and Popish proselytes. The Church, for which reformers toiled, and confessors bled, is Papal all but in name. There are, indeed, many pious, evangelical men still within her pale; and the echoes of the Reformation have not yet wholly died away in her sanctuaries. But the spirit that animates her, the impulses which guide her, the doctrines and ceremonies which she best loves, bear throughout the unmistakable features of Romanism. Shocked by the introduction of dogmas and rites, wearing the abhorred livery of Antichrist, Gospel Truth, and vital Faith, and Scriptural Piety, are forsaking her altars, saying, "Let us depart; this is not our rest; it is polluted." It is true, that she now manifests much alarm and exasperation at the bold encroachments of the Papacy, and is rousing herself to resist its endeavors to get possession of her island-throne. But there is no opposition to the principles of Romanism involved in the struggle. It is simply a contest between two kindred Hierarchies, the one seeking to extrude or absorb the other. It is

the Mother striving to unseat the Daughter. The sole question at issue is, whether Pius IX. or Victoria I. shall be Pope of England. The Pontiff of the seven-hilled City longs to wrest the crosier from the Pontiff of Buckingham Palace; and the latter, like a true woman, has no intention of resigning her power. Here is the whole pith of the controversy. The bishops and clergy of the English Church, while they are straining every nerve to preserve her from the clutches of Rome, have no wish to purify her from the tenets of Rome. They are willing enough to trade in Popish wares, only they prefer to do it on their own account.

To such a state of lamentable depravation has one of the fairest jewels of Protestant Christendom been brought by the deteriorating presence of infant baptism. This has been "the dead fly in the ointment," that has sullied her purity, and tainted her fragrance. This it is which, breaking down the fence between her and the world, and letting in upon her all its ungodliness, has filled her once green and nourishing pastures with goats instead of sheep, with wolves instead of shep-

herds. This it is, which has changed her wholesome teachings into soul-destroying errors, transformed her worship into a beggarly imitation of Popish vanities, and reduced her whole Christianity to the mere observance of forms and sacraments. Such a church may continue to be Protestant in name; but, in essence, it is completely Romanized.

An example of the workings of infant baptism in a direction different, indeed, but equally mischievous, may be seen in the theological history of Germany. Luther rolled off from the great truths of the Gospel the mass of perversions with which ages of Papal darkness had overlaid them. He brought out into clear light, and firmly established the cardinal doctrines of Atonement, of Justification by Faith, of Sanctification by the Spirit. He reformed much, but not enough to render the Reformation secure. And it is even a question whether he did more good by what he took away, or more evil by what he allowed to remain. In his ecclesiastical system, he left infant baptism, and infant membership; thus opening the church to the world, and uniting it with the State. He either did not perceive

their unscriptural character, or deemed them comparatively harmless. Devoting his whole strength to clearing the rubbish from great principles, he judged it of little importance to remove the corruptions of an outward rite. But in this his wisdom resembles that of an architect, who should lay a broad and deep foundation, and erect upon it a massive and lofty structure; while, at the same time, he leaves unnoticed a small stream flowing silently beneath it, that must inevitably sap the very ground on which it stands. Thus has it been with the work of Luther. The little rill of infant baptism, welling out from its Papal fountain, has slowly undermined the fabric which he reared, and virtually overturned it. For two centuries, indeed, the doctines which he taught were rigidly maintained. But they were held merely as a dead letter—a theological creed, for which men would buckle on the armor of controversy, but which had no place in their hearts, and no influence over their lives. This could not last. There came, at length, a change over the public mind; a breaking away from old paths of thought, and a reckless pushing into new ones. The Church

was ill prepared for the crisis. She was thoroughly secularized. The world reveled and rioted in her bosom. The great majority of her members were unconverted. Even her pastors and theological professors were, in most instances, entirely destitute of any experimental acquaintance with the power of Christianity. Such could have no inward witness of the truth of the Gospel, and no illumination of the Spirit, to guide them in their inquiries. Hence, led by unsanctified reason, and a sceptical philosophy, they plunged into the wildest and most dangerous speculations. Nothing was regarded by them as proved. Their daring criticism strove to rend and dislocate the Bible; to show that large portions of it were mere forgeries; that the idea of its divine inspiration was but an enthusiastic dream; and that the entire histories of our Lord and of His Apostles were only pious myths. And this state of things has continued, until the Church of Luther—the eldest daughter of the Reformation—has now, to a great extent, become a church of baptized unbelievers, crowded, in all her departments, with men who, while partaking her ordinances, and

filling her offices, laugh her doctrines to scorn, and assail the authority of the very Scriptures from which they preach. Here and there, it is true, one of her sons may be seen struggling to oppose the rushing tide of infidelity, and lifting up his voice amid the Babel-clamor of rationalistic sects. But its tones are feeble and uncertain; he himself is not free from infection; and, in spite of his weak resistance, the pestilence strides on.

As these sceptical views are thus embraced and advocated by the appointed expounders of Christianity, it might well be expected that they would obtain wide currency among the people themselves. And such is the fact. In Germany, all belong to the church, having been baptized into it in their infancy, and afterwards confirmed in their membership, when old enough to pronounce the Creed, and recite the Catechism. In this vast and promiscuous mass, some few may be found who manifest vital religion, appearing, among the multitude of the ungodly, like solitary travellers, walking amidst huge catacombs of the dead. With the exception of these, the entire body of German Protestants may be distributed into two

grand classes—formalists and rationalists. The first profess a profound veneration for Lutheranism, as the religion of their fathers and of their fatherland. They cling, with superstitious tenacity, to its symbols and formularies, and display a bigoted attachment to its ritual observances. This, with an occasional attendance at public worship, and a participation in the Lord's supper once or twice in their lives, comprises the whole of their Christianity. The other class, though still retaining their connection with the church, do not pretend even to a speculative belief in the truth of the Gospel. They are infidels of every type and color, from the neologist who denies the divine authority of Revelation, to the pantheist who, by deifying Nature, would annihilate God. This, unhappily, is now the popular class in Germany.

From these causes the most disastrous results have followed. Real piety is well nigh extinct. Worldliness, scepticism, and contempt for all sacred things, everywhere predominate. The people flock to demoralizing and infidel lectures, while the temples of God are deserted, and the Sabbath is turned into a carni-

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val. The Lutheran Church, once so living and vigorous, is now a putrefying carcass, sending out poisonous exhalations over her own and other lands. This even her own writers admit. Tholuck,—who, though an eminently spiritual man, is yet a strong advocate for the ecclesiastical system, of which he is so distinguished an ornament, and who, therefore, cannot be suspected of painting it in too dark a hue,—has given us the following graphic description of its present state and character. "A huge corpse—stiff, cold, and livid. What in many of its parts appears like life, is but the life of the corruption itself, by which those parts are dissolving. Only here and there, among its dying members, is there a living one, that with difficulty averts death from itself, or seeks to infuse fresh life into the dead portions around it."[1]

[1] "Einen grossen Leichnam—starr, kalt und bleich; was in vielen seiner Glieder als Leben erscheint, es ist das Leben der Verwesung selbst, das seine Glieder auflöst; nur mitten unter sterbenden Gliedern noch hie und da ein lebendiges, das mit Mühe den Tod von sich abwehrt, oder Lebensfrische in die erstorbenen Theile um sich her zu verbreiten sucht."

Tholuck, Predigten, Band I. s. 25, Hamburg, 1843.

And what has brought the Protestant Christianity of Germany into such a deplorable condition? Infant baptism. This, by throwing down the barrier with which Christ has environed his church, admitting into her enclosure the unregenerate and profane, and even installing them in her seats of instruction, has produced all these direful evils. Will it be said, that in the present depraved state of humanity, communities might easily be pervaded by an irreligious and infidel spirit, even if infant baptism had never existed? We grant it. But then the destructive element would be without the church—not, as in this case, within it. However high the tide of ungodliness may rise, all is safe while the church preserves the model ordained by its Divine Founder. Planted on the Rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, it presents an embankment to the swelling waves, which breaks their force, and rolls them harmless back. In a pure church there dwells a recuperative power, that can renovate the most degenerate lands. Living and spiritual—in the world, yet distinct from the world—it acts as a correcting and restoring

agent, reproving iniquity, confounding unbelief, and holding forth the word of life to a reckless and profligate generation. But if its own light become darkness, how great is that darkness! When the church itself engenders the disease, when its own bosom is the fountain which sends out the contagion—then the last hope disappears. Such a church cannot be reformed. It must be taken down, and give place to one built on a scriptural foundation, or the land which its presence blights, must sink, beyond recovery, into the gulf of corruption.

It may, perhaps, be affirmed, that the moral leprosy with which Lutheranism is infected, has arisen, not from infant baptism, but from certain doctrinal errors in her creed. To this Geneva gives the answer, by showing that even the most rigid orthodoxy cannot long remain pure, in connection with a practice which amalgamates the church and the world. Calvin, still more than Luther, founded his system deeply and broadly on the fundamental verities of the Gospel. But, like Luther, he left the initiatory ordinance unreformed, and thus mingled together the heterogeneous mate-

rials of regenerate and unregenerate. By this single oversight, the city where he taught, and which, illuminated by his doctrine, was once a blazing centre of light—a spiritual Pharos, cheering and guiding the faithful in all lands —has been covered with the black night of Socinianism; her radiance quenched; her voices of truth hushed; and the very pulpit in which her adored reformer preached, polluted by lips that deny the divinity of the Son of God, and the renewing agency of His Spirit. And it is a remarkable fact, and one which bears strongly on the present discussion, that the only bright spot which now shines amid her darkness, was not kindled by any successor of Calvin, but by a member of that body of Christians, whose prominent peculiarity is a rejection of the baptismal dogma which Calvin inculcated. It was through the instrumentality of Robert Haldane, a Baptist from Scotland, that D'Aubigné and his coadjutors were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and incited to the holy labor of proclaiming an uncorrupted Gospel. Thus the solitary fire that burns in Geneva was lighted by a Baptist

hand; and even this infant baptism will speedily extinguish, if it be not itself destroyed.

But a still more striking instance of the pernicious effects of this custom, is furnished by the history of our own country. Never had infant baptism a fairer field, in which to prove whether there be any good in it, than among the Puritan churches of New England. The early founders of these churches had cast off the fetters of a tyrannical Hierarchy in the old world; and although they were not entirely purified from the mischievous notion of the connection of religion with civil government, yet they brought with them to their new home views respecting the spiritual nature of Christian communities, and the simplicity of Christian worship, much more correct than those which were generally entertained in that age. They were men profoundly read in the Scriptures, of great faith and zeal, and of exemplary holiness. Since the days of the Apostles, the world has never seen a band of Christians more pure-minded, more self-denied, more conversant with heavenly things. Their situation, too, removed them far from the corrupting contact of other less evangelical societies.

They were alone in the wilderness, with themselves, their offspring, and their God. Surely then, if infant baptism could ever "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," it would have been here. Let us, then, trace its workings in this secluded position.

The original colonists of New England held that the visible church of Christ consisted of professed believers and their infant seed; that the latter being born in the church, had a right to baptism; and that, from their relation to the church, they were subject to its watch and discipline. This relation, however, was regarded as a modified one, not entitling the baptized child to the full privileges of membership, and to a participation in the Lord's supper, until he should give evidence of genuine conversion. The anomalous state in which their offspring were thus placed—neither in the church nor out of it—greatly troubled these excellent men, as it ever has and ever will all who hold such unscriptural notions. In process of time, the children of the first settlers grew up, and became themselves heads of families. Many of these still remained unregenerate. It was, therefore, a

very nice and perplexing matter to determine the true position, with respect to the church, of those who, having been baptized in infancy, did not manifest repentance and faith on their arrival at adult years. Equally difficult was it to settle the point whether the children of such ought to be baptized. These questions occasioned much solicitude, and called forth not a little discussion, throughout the colonies. The diversity of opinion, and consequent agitation, at length became so great, that, by the request of the magistrates of Connecticut, the controverted subjects were laid before an assembly of ministers convened at Boston, June 4, 1657. After deliberating fifteen days, they gave the following decision: "That it is the duty of infants who confederate in their parents, when grown up to years of discretion, though not yet fit for the Lord's supper, to own the covenant which they made with their parents, by entering into it in their own persons. And it is the duty of the church to call upon them for the performance thereof; and if, being called upon, they shall refuse the performance of this great duty, or otherwise continue scandalous, they are liable to be cen-

sured for the same by the church. And in case they understand the grounds of religion, and are not scandalous, and solemnly own the covenant in their own persons, wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire baptism for them, we see not sufficient cause to deny baptism unto their children."[1]

This decision was not received with entire unanimity. Many looked upon it as an innovation, calculated to lead to very evil consequences. The disputes and contentions respecting it grew at last to be so violent, that a General Synod was deemed necessary, in order to secure peace and uniformity of practice in the churches. Such a body, called by the order of the General Court, met at Boston, in the year 1662. In due time, the fruits of their wisdom appeared in the shape of the following Propositions.

1. "They that, according to Scripture, are members of the visible church are the subjects of baptism.

2. The members of the visible church, according to Scripture, are confederate believers,

[1] Mather's Magnalia, Book V. p. 63.

in particular churches, and their infant seed, that is, children in their minority, whose next parents, one or both, are in covenant.

3. The infant seed of confederate visible believers are members of the same church with their parents, and when grown up are personally under the watch, discipline and government of that church.

4. These adult persons are not therefore to be admitted to full communion, merely because they are, and continue to be members, without such further qualifications as the word of God requireth thereto.

5. Church members who were admitted in minority, understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto, not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the covenant before the church, wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the government of Christ in the church, their children are to be baptized."[1]

These propositions having been submitted to the General Court, an order was passed by it, October 8, 1662, commending them to all

[1] Mather's Magnalia, Book V. p. 64.

the churches in the jurisdiction.[1] Thus backed by the civil authority, the decision of the Synod was soon generally acquiesced in by the New England churches.

In this manner arose the celebrated "Half-Way Covenant," according to which, persons making no profession of a change of heart, if they only exhibited a fair outward morality, were permitted and required, on the ground of their baptism in infancy, to appear before the church, recognize their connection with it, acknowledge their covenant obligations, and bring their children to baptism. Thus was the door opened to let the world into the church. Thus, within about forty years after the landing of the Pilgrims, and while the patriarchs of the May-Flower were scarcely dead, the original strictness of their discipline was so far changed as to admit an arrangement, which virtually effaces the separating line between the holy and the unholy, between the conscious subjects of renewing grace, and the votaries of earthliness and sin. And this rapid deterioration was caused by infant baptism. Had it not been, for its existence and influ-

[1] Mather's Magnalia, Book V. p. 64.

ence, the offspring of believers, while unregenerate, would have been viewed as belonging, where they actually do belong, to "them that are without;" as sustaining no relation to the church different from that of other impenitent persons; and as deriving from their religious parentage only the privilege—a precious one indeed—of being the special objects of Christian solicitude, instruction, and prayer. But as such children were supposed, in consequence of their baptism, to hold some undefined and impalpable place in the church, the inconsistency of so regarding them, and yet practically treating them as in the world, greatly disturbed these Puritan Fathers, as it has their descendants ever since. Hence they devised a plan by which baptized adults, who were still unconverted, might be brought away from the court of the Gentiles, and be made, at least, to confess themselves proselytes of the gate. Another reason which led them to this course, was the erroneous idea which they entertained —an idea growing out of infant baptism— that it was the particular appointment of God to perpetuate his kingdom on earth by hereditary descent When, therefore, they saw their

children arriving at maturity, and becoming themselves parents, without possessing that spiritual character which would fit them to take their place at the Lord's table, they became greatly alarmed for the continuance of religion in future times.[1] To guard against this danger, they resolved that their sons and daughters, if not prepared to make a full profession, should, at any rate, make half of one, and so far own the covenant as to bring their infants within it; in this manner serving as a sort of intermediate conductors to convey the faith of the grand parents to the grand children, and thus securing the transmission of grace to posterity.

The corrupt principle contained in this measure, and the evils which resulted from it, cannot be described more forcibly than they have been by the eloquent Dr. Wisner, who, as a Pedobaptist, cannot be supposed to have overdrawn the picture. "Persons were permitted to come and make, in the most solemn circumstances, the most solemn of all professions, when they did not regard themselves, and were not regarded by others, as having at all in

[1] Mather's Magnalia, Book V. p. 63.

heart given themselves away to God, and trusted in Christ, and yielded themselves up to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. And as to the promises which were annexed, of educating children in the fear of the Lord, and submitting to the discipline of the church, on the one hand, and of watchful care on the other, they too soon came to be alike disregarded, both by those who exacted and by those who made them. Parents did not, and soon were not expected, to fulfill their engagements, in form so solemn and significant; and churches did not, and soon were not expected to fulfill theirs. Thus the most solemn and impressive acts of religion came to be regarded as unmeaning ceremonies; the form only to be thought important, while the substance was overlooked, and rapidly passing away."[1]

It was not to be expected that the evil would stop here. The progress of degeneracy is ever more decided and rapid, the longer it continues. It is like the letting out of imprisoned waters, which rush along with a force and volume constantly increasing. Accordingly, the same writer thus graphically records the

[1] Wisner's History of the Old South Church.

consequences to which it soon led. "And now another and still more fatal step was taken in this downward course. Why should such a difference be made between the two Christian sacraments, which reason infers from the nature of the case, and the Scriptures clearly determine, require precisely the same qualifications? If persons were qualified to make, in order to come to one ordinance, the very same profession, both in meaning and in terms, required to come to the other, why should they be excluded from that other? The practical result, every one sees, would be, that if the innovation already made were not abandoned, another would speedily be introduced. And such was the fact. Correct moral deportment, with a profession of correct doctrinal opinions, and a desire for regeneration, came to be regarded as the only qualification for admission to the communion. This innovation, though not as yet publicly advocated by any, there is conclusive proof had become quite extensive in practice previously to 1679. The churches soon came to consist very considerably, in many places, of unregenerate persons—of those who regarded themselves, and were re-

garded by others, as unregenerate. Of all these things the consequence was, that within thirty years after the commencement of the eighteenth century, a large portion of the clergy, through the country, were either only speculatively correct, or to some extent actually erroneous in their religious opinions, maintaining regularly the forms of religion, but in some instances having well nigh lost, and in others, it is to be feared, having never felt, its power."[1]

To such a state had the Puritan churches of New England been brought by infant baptism, within a single century. Silently but surely it had done its work, sapping successively the safeguards of truth and purity, until by the abandonment of the principle, that none but "living stones" should be incorporated into the house of God, the last defence gave way, and a torrent of corruption flowed in. The world emptied itself into the church. There was, in fact, no longer any world. It was all church. Everywhere men avowedly unconverted belonged to her communion, presided over her interests, served at her altars. With

[1] Wisner's History, etc.

a membership and ministry thus alike carnal, it was not to be supposed that she would retain, for any length of time, even a theoretical belief in the grand teachings of revelation. These, however, were not at once repudiated The forms of faith, which have become fixed in a community, do not suddenly pass away. Truth leaves the heart and the lips long before it leaves the creed. For a considerable period, therefore, a dead, leaden orthodoxy hung over New England, hiding, like a shroud, the rottenness beneath. But this could not continue. An incipient change began to be perceived. The distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel were not, indeed, denounced and opposed. They were passed over. While still keeping their place in Confessions and Articles, they were quietly dismissed from the Pulpit, to make room for moral essays, and panegyrics on the beauty of natural virtue. The downward process, having gone thus far, must go farther. Men are never satisfied with what is merely negative. They demand the positive; and when once they have discarded positive truth, their next step is to embrace positive error. Hence, we find that as early as the

middle of the last century, opinions involving a denial of the proper divinity of Christ, the depravity of human nature, the need of atonement, and the work of the Spirit in regeneration, were extensively adopted in Massachusetts. Advocated at first by some prominent ministers of Boston, they spread for fifty years through the country, pervading the graceless clergy and the still more graceless laity; until, the season of incubation having expired, the monstrous egg broke at last, and the great Unitarian Apostacy stood revealed in all its hideousness.

Now, we affirm that this most disastrous consummation was the direct result of infant baptism. It was the product of a series of agencies of which infant baptism was the beginning and author. Its proximate cause is doubtless to be found in the practices growing out of the half way Covenant. But what originated the half way Covenant? Would this strange device have ever seen the light, had it not been for the illicit union of the church with infant baptism? Do not all the writers of that period expressly declare, that its sole purpose was to induce irreligious parents, who

had been baptized in infancy, to make a formal recognition of the covenant, so that their children might be brought to the font, and thus infant baptism be perpetuated? Without infant baptism, such a measure would never have been dreamed of, nor could the slightest pretence have been set up for its adoption. Infant baptism, then, we say again, is the original and real parent of New England Unitarianism.

And as in Geneva, so here, the first check given to the rampant heresy came from those who had never acknowledged Pedobaptism When the banner of an insulted Christ lay soiled and trampled in the dust, the venerated Stillman and Baldwin caught it up, and waving it abroad in the breeze, sent the war-cry of Immanuel echoing over all the hills and vallies of New England; until the few, "faithful found among the faithless," had time to rally and make head against the overwhelming defection. A Pedobaptist historian very candidly informs us, that "at the beginning of the present century, all the Congregational churches in Boston, with a single exception, had renounced the faith of the Puritans. The

Old South still stood upon the platform of the fathers, though her pastor was a semi-Arian. But when the enemy came in like a flood, the Lord lifted up a standard against him. In the year 1803, the Baptist churches in the city were visited with a precious revival, in which the Old South shared to some extent."[1] A few of the members of this Church, occasionally worshipping with the Baptists, became revived, and established a prayer meeting among themselves; from which a renovating movement commenced, that has been the origin of all the Orthodox Congregational Churches with which the City of the Pilgrims is now blessed. Thus when infant baptism had put out the fire on all its own altars, with the exception of one solitary shrine, and had caused it even there to burn dim and low; the flame was kindled again from altars which this unscriptural rite had never been suffered to profane. And while, amid the Egyptian darkness that settled down over the Pedobaptists in Boston, the Baptists, in their Goshen at the North End,[2] thus walked in

[1] Moore's Boston Revivals, p. 28.

[2] The part of the city in which the Baptist churches were located.

unclouded light, and showed themselves valiant for the truth; so, throughout the land, feeble and scattered as they were, they stood firm by the cause of their Master. Though thousands around were casting off the authority of Jesus, not a man of them wavered in his allegiance. From all their places of worship the ensign of the cross streamed out undepressed and untarnished; and from all their pulpits the Godhead of Christ, and the sovereign efficacy of His blood, were distinctly and earnestly proclaimed. To the memory of these brave-hearted men justice may never be done in this world. But we doubt not, that in the great day of decision, when all events and instrumentalities shall be placed in their true light, it will appear that to the Baptists of Massachusetts belongs the honor of having been the first to arrest the overflowing scourge; that they were the Abdiels who remained faithful in the midst of revolted multitudes; that it was they, who, when all seemed lost, threw themselves, single-handed, into the van of the battle, and held the field against fearful odds, until, behind their sheltering front, the broken ranks of Orthodoxy were formed anew. Peace

to the ashes of these Christian heroes! May their names and their deeds be precious to New England, as they are already blessed in heaven!

The great facts, which have been thus briefly reviewed, are full of instruction. They teach us, with the truth and certainty of history, that infant baptism, whenever operating without restraint, will inevitably corrupt the communities that uphold it. Either, by introducing the dogma of baptismal regeneration, and attributing saving virtue to outward forms, it will develop itself into essential Romanism; or, by admitting the unregenerate into the church, and joining together what God has put asunder, it will prepare the way for a dead and soulless Faith, soon to be quickened into a living Infidelity. Whichever direction it takes, and in whatever shape its influence is displayed, it is "evil, only evil, and that continually." We cannot but regard it as the most pernicious heresy which has ever sullied the primitive simplicity of the Gospel. We are constrained to believe, that, directly or indirectly, it has done more than all other corruptions combined, to pollute Christianity, to

enfeeble her power, and to keep back the hour of her final triumph. It is, in fact, the origin of most of these corruptions,—the source from which they have sprung, and by which they are constantly fed. In a word, we look upon it as the most dangerous element that now exists in the Church. And it is all the more dangerous from the slow and insidious manner in which it accomplishes its results. Were it to stand out in open day, with its real nature and tendencies fully revealed, the whole host of God's people would rise up to banish it from the earth. But it acts silently and covertly, reaching its ends by steps so circuitous, and by a progress so imperceptible, that the consequences are not seen till the catastrophe comes; and even then they are referred, not to the primal cause, but to some one of the intermediate agencies which it has set in motion.

To the views here expressed it may be objected, that there are several denominations of Christians in this country, who practice infant baptism, and yet maintain evangelical sentiments, and exhibit an evangelical spirit. This is cheerfully admitted. Nevertheless, it does

not shake our confidence in the soundness of the position we have taken. In these denominations, infant baptism is not allowed its free and natural development. It is restricted and hemmed in by a counteracting power. And this power goes out from the Baptist Churches. While claiming no superiority over their evangelical sisters, in general correctness of doctrine, or purity of Christian character; they do claim—and Scripture sustains the claim—that, on the particular subject of baptism, they alone hold the truth; and what they firmly believe, they fearlessly declare. By their constantly increasing numbers; by their almost universal diffusion; by the scriptural and even self-evident nature of their principles,—a wide public opinion has been created unfavorable to infant baptism. This prevailing sentiment acts not on Baptists alone; nor on those only who are immediately under their influence. It affects all classes. It penetrates even the guarded inclosure of Pedobaptist churches, producing an unconfessed, but ever active distrust of an institution, to which the Bible lends no sanction. This is shown by the sad complainings which

are utterred in certain quarters, respecting the diminution in the number of baptized children, and the difficulty of persuading parents to comply with a custom, for which they can find neither precept nor example in the Word of God. In some sections, indeed, the practice seems rapidly falling in desuetude. And were ministers and theological teachers to cease striving to uphold, by their bare authority, a rite which they never have proved, and never can prove, to be of divine appointment, the masses would soon lay it aside altogether.

Thus circumscribed and impeded, infant baptism does not display its full character and tendency. Born in the twilight of superstition, it puts forth all its energies for evil only when surrounded by its native element. Under the noon-day of truth which Baptists are now pouring upon it, its eyes are dazzled; it becomes torpid; its huge limbs shrivel up; it assumes the shrunken form of a mere act of "symbolic dedication;" even some of its friends begin to treat it as a small affair, and almost to ignore it.

Yet, even in this shorn and crippled state, it

is neither dead nor harmless. It must, under any circumstances, operate as a fatal injury, or a gross injustice, to those on whom it is administered. If, as they grow up, it lead them, as it naturally may, to suppose themselves in a peculiar relation to God, bearing the seal of His covenant, and set apart as His special property; it will inevitably render them secure in their impenitence, under the persuasion that by virtue of their baptism they shall certainly obtain grace at last; and thus it will prove the direct means of their everlasting destruction. Or if, in spite of this delusive impression, the divine Spirit should reach their hearts, convince them of their lost condition, and bring them to Christ; then it will act as an unrighteous bond to withhold them from duty. A ceremony, in which they bore no conscious share; vows, made by others in their name, without their consent or knowledge—will be urged as arguments to prevent them from obeying the plain command of the Saviour, first to believe, and then to be baptized. In both these cases, infant baptism is a flagrant wrong. In the one, it is a snare to the soul; in the other, a trap to the conscience.

But this is not the only evil which it is producing, at the present day, among the Pedobaptist communities of our own land. In some directions, its old Popish leaven is busily working. Already, through its operation, a large portion of the Episcopal denomination has become essentially Romanized, both in spirit and in practice. And in certain sections of the Presbyterian body, views are advanced with respect to its efficacy, and the moral position of its subjects, which involve the very germ of Popery. No—infant baptism has not lost its venom under the bright sun of the nineteenth century, and in the free air of republican America. And if it does not, at last, render this country Papal or infidel, it will be owing, under God, to the resistance it meets with from the Baptist churches. Let their light be withdrawn, and a few generations would see our now broad and happy land covered with spiritual darkness, rotting beneath the stagnant waters of Formalism, or swept by the wild waves of a God-denying Liberalism.

One more great truth has been evolved by our inquiries. It is, that when Christian bodies,

retaining infant baptism, become corrupt, they have no inherent power to throw off the contaminating influence, and spring forth into new life. If a church, built on the apostolical basis of admitting to membership only the avowedly regenerate, should in procees of time be debased by the intrusion of secular ingredients, it has the element of restoration within itself. The remedy lies in a recurrence to its own first principles; in the enforcement of that fundamental law of its constitution, which requires, that God's spiritual house should be composed of spiritual materials alone. But it is widely different with a Pedobaptist church. It can derive no help from a resort to its first principles. These first principles have done all the mischief. The regarding it as an elementary rule, that the church of Christ consists of believers and their unconverted seed, thus mingling together the "lively stones" of the sanctuary, and "the wood, hay, and stubble" of the world—has been the very wellspring of the corruption which overspreads it. How, then, can it put away this corruption, while its source remains? Such a result is clearly impossible. It may manifest occasional

amendment. There may be in its history intervals of revival and of comparative purity. But they will be partial and evanescent. The same prolific fountain will continue to send out its streams to deluge and pollute it anew. For such a church there is no alternative but to renounce its first principles, and adopt the platform of the Bible, or sink, at length, in irreclaimable degeneracy. The history of the world does not furnish an instance of a Pedobaptist church, remaining such, that has radically and permanently reformed itself. The Church of England has not done it, and never can do it. She must cease her unholy alliance with the State; she must cease to admit to her communion the worldly and the profane; in other words, she must cease to be Pedobaptist—cease to be herself—and be transmuted into a new, spiritual church, modeled according to the pattern of the Gospel—before the Spirit of Holiness will revisit her tabernacles. The Church of Germany has not done it, and never can do it. All the learning, and piety, and zeal of the noble band of evangelical men, that are now rising up in her midst, will never dispel the gangrene from her vitals, unless the

cause be removed, by the removal of infant baptism, and its attendant evils. There may be, in particular spots, signs of spasmodic life; and here and there individuals may be found who appear truly awake to the concerns of eternity. But over the great body of her communion, Death will still reign in all the intensity of its power. It is not from a church so sunk in the mire of secularity, that the redemption of Germany is to come. The day of that redemption is indeed dawning; but its beams emanate not from the lecture-rooms of the universities, nor from the pulpits of endowed cathedrals. It is from the little companies of baptized believers, gathered by Oncken, and Köbner, and Lehmann, that there goes forth over the land of Luther and Melancthon, the morning light of a second Reformation; a Reformation which shall be complete, as the first was partial, and which shall overthrow the citadel of darkness, as that did its outworks. So it has been, and so it will be ever. The records of every century since infant baptism arose, corroborate the statement, that communities, plunged by it into moral decay, never recover by any impulse

from within. The energy, which shall fully reanimate them, must come from without; and even then the result can be perfectly secured, only by taking their whole frame-work in pieces, and reconstructing it on a scriptural basis.

For evangelical Pedobaptists, of whatever name, we cherish the most fraternal feelings. We salute them as brethren in Christ. We know them to be devoted, heart and soul, to the same holy Cause, in which we humbly toil. We believe that they desire, with a sincerity and earnestness unsurpassed by our own, the abolition of every form of superstition and unbelief, and the spread of a pure Gospel throughout the earth. But, at the same time, we are solemnly convinced, that so long as they cling to infant baptism, they can never see these ends entirely accomplished. How can they hope to demolish Romanism, while they strive to perpetuate, in their own organizations, the very key-stone of its whole system; the chief instrument which brought it into being, and which will inevitably build it up again, the same in substance, if not in name? Or how can they look for ultimate

triumph in the conflict with infidelity, if they cherish among themselves a traitor, that, fast as they can drive one army from the field, will bring a fresh one into it? This is but the labor of Sisyphus repeated. The stone of victory, rolled almost to the mountain-top, will rebound and fall back into the abyss. Such efforts, to be successful, must begin at the foundation. The axe must be laid at the root. Infant Baptism—that old Upas tree, which, with its death-distilling branches, Ungodly Church-Membership, State-Religions, Prelacy, Popery, and Scepticism, has for fourteen centuries shaded and blasted the world—must come down, before the pure light of Heaven, and the sweet breath of Life, can circulate freely over the expanse of our darkened and diseased humanity.

How momentous is the part assigned to those who hold the ordinances of Christ as He delivered them! We cannot doubt that it is the purpose of God to introduce, through their instrumentality, that general return to primitive order, which is to herald the crowning conquests of the Gospel. From the time of the first departure from apostolical purity,

even down through all the darkest eras of the subsequent Apostacy, there has always been a succession of men, who, abjuring all communion with Rome, have, under different names, and in different countries, kept the word and the testimony of Jesus. And the rapid growth, in our own day, of the true descendants of these ancient witnesses, their advanced position, their disciplined array, their increasing influence and resources, furnish significant indications, that their great work is soon to be achieved. What a solemn mission is theirs! How do the coming destinies of the church and of the world hang upon it! Their principles must prevail, or tradition, imposture, and infidelity will still hold the field. Their banner must wave from every tower and battlement of Zion, or final victory can never be hers. May "the Captain of Salvation" give them grace to fulfill the trust committed to their hands.

CHAPTER V.

CERTAIN EXTINCTION OF INFANT BAPTISM.

It is true, that from the fifth century until now, this pernicious error has held sway over the greater part of those who have borne the Christian name; bringing with it all the corruptions of doctrine and of discipline which inevitably follow in its train. It is also true, that, though its power has been checked, and its hold on the public mind weakened, it is still widely prevalent; substituting, throughout whole nations, a mere nominal Christianity for the pure and life-living Gospel; propping up time-worn abuses; and retarding the moral emancipation of the world. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that the time is hastening on, when, strongly intrenched as it now is in the superstitious veneration of the masses, and upheld, from interested motives, by lordly priests and bloated hierarchies, it shall be ut-

terly and forever extirpated. The Scriptures teem with the delightful announcement, that a day shall yet dawn on the earth, when Christianity shall not only universally prevail, but shall be wholly freed from the numerous perversions by which its energies have been impaired, and its beauty disfigured. In that predicted period, "the Man of Sin" shall be destroyed, and every trace and relic of his influence be swept away. The doctrines of the Gospel will shine out in their primal lustre, and its ordinances again be restored to apostolical purity and simplicity. Christ "shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and His name one."[1] In other words, "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," shall be acknowledged and received by all Christians: and there shall be a universal agreement with respect both to the inward essence and the outward institutions of the Gospel. In this glorious reign of truth and holiness—the "latter day," which inspiration promises, and for which every pious heart must fervently long—infant baptism will no

[1] Zech. xiv. 9.

more be practiced, but will vanish and be forgotten, as the shadows of the morning twilight melt before the risen sun This I most confidently believe. As firmly as I believe that the Gospel shall yet subdue the world, so firmly do I believe that, in the consummation of its triumphs, infant baptism, with every other antichristian custom, will be driven out of the church, and be cast into the same bottomless pit with the Beast and the false prophet. The reasons on which my belief is founded, are partially implied in the statements above made. It may be desirable however, that I should adduce them more particularly, and at greater length.

I believe this, because, in the time referred to, churches will be formed on the same model with those in the days of the Apostles. That this will be the case, is clearly manifest from the teachings of prophecy. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The City of Righteous-

ness."[1] "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me."[2] "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament."[3] Now the apostolical churches contained only baptized believers, or such persons, and such alone, as had by baptism made a public profession of their faith. The church at Jerusalem—the first Christian Church that was instituted—consisted of the Apostles and others who had been converted and baptized during the ministry of our Lord; and then of those who, on the day of Pentecost and subsequently received the truth, and were added by baptism, to the company of the disciples.[4] The next Christian Church was at Samaria; and this was composed of men and women, who were baptized on believing the Gospel preached by

[1] Isa i. 25, 26 [2] Jer. xxx. 18, 20. [3] Rev. xi. 19.
[4] Acts ii. 41: iv. 4.

Philip.[1] The Church at Corinth consisted of those who, having heard the word from the lips of Paul, believed and were baptized.[2] Of similar converts were the Churches at Rome, Philippi, and Colosse composed. In all the New Testament, not a single instance of infant baptism nor of infant membership is recorded, or even intimated. Nor is there the slightest hint that any were ever received into churches, who had not been baptized on a personal profession of their faith. If therefore, such was the apostolical constitution of the Church; and if, in the latter day, this constitution is to be restored; it follows that infant baptism will then be no more practiced.

I believe this, because the ordinances of the Gospel will then be administered as they were originally appointed, free from all the present intermixtures of superstition and corruption. Such I consider to be the meaning of that vision of the Apocalypse—*the opening of the temple of God in Heaven*[3]—seen by St. John immediately after the sounding of the seventh trumpet. I interpet this as a symbolical an-

[1] Acts viii. 12. [2] Acts xviii. 8.
[3] Rev. xi. 19: xv. 5.

nouncement of the restoration of the worship, doctrines, discipline, and ordinances of the Gospel to their free use, and to their primitive purity. In the coming era of scriptural light and knowledge, "the tabernacle of the testimony"—the pure truth of God—so long shut up by ecclesiastical tyranny, or hidden behind the veil of perversions and false glosses, will be thrown wide open, revealing its treasures to every eye, and filling every mind with its heavenly radiance. In this broad and bright illumination, every form of error will shrink away, and be annihilated. The teachings of the Gospel will be rightly understood, and cordially embraced. The Lord's supper will be administered, clear of all the corruptions and ceremonies, introduced into it by Papists, and retained by Protestants. In like manner, the ordinance of baptism will be purified and brought back to the scriptural model. In the first ages of Christianity, it was administered to believers alone, and by immersion only. So will it be in the future age of renovation. Of course, then, infant sprinkling will be practiced no more.

I believe this, because Christ will then be

King over all the earth in a spiritual sense; the one Lord whose commands will be obeyed with great precision and exactness, as they are made known in His Word. Among the commands which He has given, baptism is included; and as he will be acknowledged the one Lord and Head of the Church,—and not the Pope, whose power will then be ended—there will be one Baptism, which will be administered to one class of subjects only, and by immersion only—the one mode which He has ordained in His statutes, and confirmed by his example. Infant sprinkling, therefore, will be practiced no more.

I believe this, because, in the advancing period of Zion's glory, the *name* of Christ, that is, His religion, will be one and the same in every part of the world. In spirit, in doctrine, in form, it will be precisely what it was when it came, all stainless and living, from its Divine Founder. Now it appears various, discordant, even contradictory, owing to the different manner in which it is professed and exhibited. But in the latter day, it will be uniform and harmonious in all its branches, as embraced, felt and manifested by all Christians.

And as baptism is a part of Christ's religion, this also will be observed in a uniform manner by all who bear Christ's name. For since the name of Christ, or the Christian religion in all its parts, will be the same in all who profess it; I, therefore, am firmly persuaded, that baptism will be practiced alike by all, according to its primitive institution; and, consequently, that infant sprinkling will be forever abolished.

I believe this, because, in the latter day, "the watchmen of Zion will see eye to eye."[1] As the appointed teachers of Christianity will be of one mind, with respect both to its doctrines and its duties, and will alike preach the one, and practice the other; so the people, under their ministrations, will be all of the same belief; receiving the truths of the Gospel in the love of them, and submitting to its precepts and institutions, without any difference among themselves, and without any variation from the word of God. There will then no longer be any strife about baptism. All will agree, that its proper subjects are believers, and its right mode immersion. Thus infant

[1] Isa. lii. 8.

sprinkling will no more be contended for; and Christians will in all things serve the Lord with one consent.[1]

Another reason why I firmly believe that infant baptism will hereafter entirely cease, is, because Antichrist will be utterly consumed by the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and with the brightness of his coming.[2] In other words, Romanism, with all kindred systems of falsehood and impiety, will be annihilated by the pure and powerful preaching of the Gospel, when Christ shall come to take to Himself His power, and reign spiritually in the churches, in a manner more glorious than He has ever yet done. Then all antichristian doctrines and practices will be entirely abolished, even the whole body of antichristian worship. Not a limb of Antichrist shall remain, but all be consumed. Now as I fully believe, and think it has been clearly shown, that infant baptism is a part and pillar of Popery, a limb of Antichrist, a branch of superstition and will-worship, introduced by the Man of Sin,—when he shall be destroyed, this shall be destroyed with him.

[1] Zep. iii. 9. [2] 2 Thess. ii. 8.

Nor am I shaken in this belief by the fact, that, in various ages, wise and good men have embraced and practiced infant baptism. It is a part of "the wood, hay, and stubble," laid by them upon the foundation. It is one of those works of theirs—the product of human device and invention—which the bright day of the Gospel shall declare to be a falsehood; and which the fire of the word will try, burn up, and consume, though they themselves shall be saved. And, therefore, being utterly consumed, it shall no more appear in the world.

When the angel, foretold in the Apocalypse, shall descend from heaven with great power, to proclaim the fall of spiritual Babylon, the whole earth shall be lightened with his glory.[1] Before the blazing splendor of truth, that will surround his path, all darkness shall be removed, and all works of darkness be made manifest and cast off—among which infant baptism is one. Then shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.[2] That is, the knowledge of the word, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances

[1] Rev. xviii. 1, 2. [2] Isa. xi. 9.

of God, shall universally prevail; and all ignorance, misconception, or abuse of them be banished forever. The ordinance of baptism will then be disentangled from the mass of traditions which have so long encumbered it, and appear once more in its native lustre. It will be observed in strict accordance with its original mode and design, and every corruption of it be scrupulously rejected. Hence, as infant baptism is such a corruption, it will, in that day, be abhorred and cast away.

Since we are taught in Scripture, that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are to continue until the coming of Christ at the end of the world;[1] and since these ordinances have been greatly and very generally corrupted; it is not reasonable to suppose that their Divine Author will allow them always to remain in this deformed and vitiated state; but that in the spiritual reign of Christ—the blissful period that is to usher in His final Advent,—every perversion which has been made of their intent, and every addition or curtailment which has marred their inspired model, will be scattered, like chaff, before the might

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 26.

of the triumphant Gospel. And as in relation to baptism, there must be, on the one side or the other, a mistake with respect both to its subjects and its mode; and as I am thoroughly persuaded that this mistake exists on the side of the Pedobaptists; so I as firmly believe, for the reason given, that it will be removed, and infant sprinkling be no more used.

The time when this happy consummation will take place, is that predicted in the message to the church at Philadelphia,[1] whose state I regard as emblematical of the spiritual reign of Christ in the latter day. In this conclusion I am confirmed by the character given of that church and of its members. It is described as having kept the word of Christ; and this, I conceive, prefigures the conduct of Christians in the millenial age; when not only will the doctrines of the Gospel be purely preached and openly professed, but its ordinances also, baptism and the Lord's supper, which,—especially baptism,—have been sadly corrupted in almost all former periods except the apostolic, will be restored to their pristine purity and glory. Hence it is promised to this church,

[1] Rev. iii. 7–12.

and through it to the churches of that future era which it represents, that because it had truly and faithfully kept the word of Christ's patience, it should be delivered from the hour of temptation which should come upon all the earth. It is also exhorted to hold fast what it had, and to maintain both doctrines and ordinances as they were delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and as it now held them in their primitive simplicity and incorruptness.[1]

[1] This interpretation of the learned author will not bear the test of sober criticism. The Apostle John was instructed by our Lord to address a message to the church in Philadelphia—a church existing in his own time, and in the region which had been the principal scene of his own labors. In this message, allusion is made to the state and character of the church, and to recent events in its history. Its steadfastness and fidelity are commended; and a promise is given to it of triumph over the Judaical party, by whose factious conduct its peace, in common with that of all the early churches, had been greatly disturbed. Then follows the animating assurance of preservation in the approaching hour of temptation, which should come upon all the world; by which is undoubtedly meant one of those severe and general persecutions which took place under the Roman emperors. Now that there is much in this message instructive and profitable to Christians in all ages, as well as to those to whom it was primarily directed, none will deny. But to

These are the principal reasons why I believe, with a strong and unwavering faith, that the time is coming, and I trust is not far off, when infant baptism, with its numerous progeny of baleful influences and results, will be banished from the earth, no more to pollute the fair face of Christianity, and no more to deceive the souls of men.

In our own times, a great and just alarm is felt at the rapid increase of Popery, and the spread of principles kindred with it, and tending to its propagation. The Beast seems recovering from his deadly wound,[1] and with invigorated energies, is preparing for a last effort

convert it into a prophecy, and make it, in fact, a symbol of one of the grand epochs in the unfolding destinies of the Gospel,—when not the slightest hint of such an application is contained in the message itself,—is a mode of expounding Scripture altogether arbitrary and fanciful. It is unquestionably true, that the universal prevalence of Christianity is the subject of numerous scriptural predictions; and that, in the period of their fulfilment, the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel will be purely held and kept. But it is not true that the state of the Philadelphian Church was designed by the Holy Spirit to be a prophetic emblem of that period.—Ed.

[1] Rev. xiii. 3, 12.

to regain the mastery of the world; while the numberless bands of his auxiliaries and satelites—Baptismal Regeneration, Sacramental Efficacy, Formalism, Mysticism, and Political Intrigue—in diverse array, and with motley banners, are mustering, thick and fast, to the onset. Every thing betokens the coming on of the final struggle between the powers of Light and of Darkness. This combat Protestantism is in no condition to meet successfully. By retaining Infant Baptism, she keeps in her very citadel the chief supporter and prime minister of the foe; insidiously sapping her strength, betraying her defences, spiking her artillery, and waiting but for a fitting moment to lay her, prostrate and helpless, at the feet of her victorious enemy. Down with the traitor! Tear off his disguise, and lay bare beneath it the uniform of the Papacy! Wash his painted face, and read on his brow "the mark of the Beast." Thus detected and renounced, send him back to the camp of Antichrist, where he belongs. Then, and not till then, may the Protestant host, united under the broad standard of "the truth as it is in Jesus," formed in Gospel order, and moving on to the

exulting war-cry, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," hope to scatter the forces of Superstition and Falsehood, and bear the uplifted ensign of Salvation in triumph over the world.

THE END.

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